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SOLEMN WARNINGS

OF

THE GREAT SHEPHERD JESUS CHRIST.

W. DYCE. DEL. HANHART LITH.

Ecce Ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus, usque ad consummationem sæculi.

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MEMORIALE VITÆ SACERDOTALIS,

OR

SOLEMN WARNINGS

OF

THE GREAT SHEPHERD JESUS CHRIST

TO THE PASTORS OF HIS CHURCH.

From the Latin of Arbisenet.

ADAPTED TO THE USE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH BY

THE BISHOP OF BRECHIN.

SECOND EDITION.

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TO

MY BRETHREN BELOVED IN CHRIST,

THE CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF BRECHIN,

IN THE HOPE THAT IT MAY TEND

TO THAT INWARD SANCTIFICATION

ON WHICH SO MUCH OF MINISTERIAL SUCCESS DEPENDS,

This Translation

IS,

WITH MUCH RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

A BOOK of devotion for the use of the clergy must always prove acceptable; and yet there are not many manuals of this nature which have acquired a standard reputation among us. George Herbert's *Country Parson* will last as long as Anglicanism exists; and much excellent matter may be found in the printed charges of the Episcopate. Bishop Taylor's *Advices*, Bishop Burnet's *Pastoral Care*, Bishop Wilson's *Parochialia*, are all excellent; but, on the whole, one may say, that, considering the importance of the object, a good and sound manual for clerical use is still a desideratum amongst us.

The present adaptation cannot be regarded as a manual of devotion in the strict sense of the word, but is intended to be the harbinger of one. The strong light in which this thoughtful work (which has been well called, "the clergyman's Kempis") places the duties of the clergy, in the way of warnings by our LORD, and of devout acquiescences on the part of His disciple, will doubtless help to create a demand for some work of piety more exclusively for the use of the LORD'S heritage; and we cannot doubt but that some one will be raised up to supply this want. Such an one will deserve the thanks of his brethren.

If it be found that the Christian's course on earth is so steep and slippery, that every aid in the way of books of piety and devotion is necessary to enable him to fight the good fight of faith, it surely almost follows as a consequence, that, amid the peculiar and additional trials to which the clergy are exposed, a similar help should be afforded.

It cannot be doubted—and the experience of every clergyman, who compares his spiritual combat now with that before his ordination, will confirm the fact—that the Ecclesiastical state has got temptations peculiarly its own. Those who look narrowly into their hearts will find the existence of sources of sin within them that were never called out till they were dedicated to the LORD; and the external circumstances of the life, while it protects them against some of the grosser sins, exposes them eminently to some subtler ones, which ravage the soul. The external hedge of outward decency, and what the world expects in the way of apparent decorum, may do much to save from some offences, but everything else—the position, the confidence usually placed in a clergyman, the inevitable public display, the necessity of being a guide to others, the having to talk of religion in a professional way, and many other things—do tend, specially, to expose the clergy to very serious temptation. As the laity become more religious, they naturally come to lean more on the opinions of their clergy; and one need hardly say how dangerous this is to the clergyman himself. Thus his very virtues become snares to him; and the more zealous and laborious he is, the stronger come upon him such temptations as I allude to. And this is the more to be watched whenever the pastoral care takes the shape of anything like spiritual direction—the highest and closest relation between priest and people. Whatever may be said for or against this—however much truth there may be in the fact, that no soul can attain to high perfection without that submission of the will which spiritual direction requires and creates—or however much may be said of the danger of weakening the moral sense by relying on another's dictation—as a matter of fact, spiritual direction, in some shape or other, will exist, so long as temptation assaults, and the remains of the fall subsist in Christians. Both within and without the Church, a craving for this exists—so strong, that it is the policy of a wise ruler not to try to quench it, but to guide and to direct it to good.

But while we accept the fact of its necessity, and in some cases commend that of its exercise, it will at once

be seen what a snare it may be to the clergyman. And the same tells down through all the different degrees of the pastoral relationship. So dangerous is it for poor frail man to be looked up to, even in the legitimate discharge of the holiest of functions.

The first duty, then, of every clergyman is to know his temptations in this respect, and to pray for the grace of humility. It is also very necessary for him to appreciate at once the dignity and the lowliness of the priesthood, for the condition of the servant of the Altar is a notable instance of that double character, implying almost contradiction, which the wonderful mystery of the Incarnation has introduced into the world. That mighty event, whereby the Author of Life died—the Possessor of all things became poor—has instilled its own preternatural virtue, and its own paradox, into all things that bear its image, and derive their nature from it. An apparent inconsistency is now no argument against the truth and reality of the things of the Spirit, for as the two ends of that rainbow whose centre is hid from us display their varied colours in the reverse order, so the dispensations of the Almighty, of which we only see a part, and those portions only which touch the earth, will often exhibit to us, who perceive not the connexion, contrary manifestations, not to be reasoned upon, but to be submitted to. Of this nature is the faith, the most unreasonable of arguments, yet the victory that overcometh the world. Of this kind is the blessedness of little children, thoughtless, fickle, as the fabled creatures of superstition, yet whose angels are beholding the FATHER'S Face. Of this nature is poverty, apparently the direct bar to all spirituality, yet the portion of the blessed of GOD.

Now, the clerical state is of this nature :—It is exceeding high in its dignity, yet it must stoop to the lowest things. The clergyman is the ambassador of his GOD; he is also the servant of all. He handles mysteries which the angels dare not touch, yet he has to stoop to the lowliest occupations. He exercises powers beyond the highest earthly authorities, yet he has to renounce the world and its pomps, and lead a self-denying life among CHRIST'S poor and His little ones.

This double condition is strikingly expressed in the words of the Middle Age—

O Sacerdos, quid es tu?
Non es a te, quia de nihilo,
Non es ad te, quia mediator ad Deum,
Non es tibi, quia sponsus ecclesiæ,
Non es tui, quia servus omnium,
Non es tu, quia Dei minister,
Quid es ergo—nihil et omnia,
O Sacerdos.

And it is in this light that the clergy should specially look upon the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession. That blessed truth, instead of tending to inflate them with a sacerdotal arrogance, should weigh heavy upon them, as a token of increased responsibility. Once admit that the valid administration of the Sacraments and the right tradition of doctrine depend upon this, and you get the highest incentive to devotion and a holy life. There is no room for laxity with this belief. A clergyman, holding this, must not only live as becomes this belief, but (in this country at least) he is pledged to a missionary spirit, to win into the true Fold the scattered sheep without. Privilege and responsibility are as closely united in the kingdom of Grace, as sin and punishment in that of Providence.

While, then, he studies to guard himself against the snares which his position is apt to entangle him in, the good clergyman will "magnify his office"—not with the feeling that it is to add to his temporal consequence, but with the thought that it augments his Christian responsibility. The laxity of manners during the last century, and a low view of the functions of the Christian priesthood acted and reacted on each other. A man dared not think of himself as the ambassador of CHRIST while leading the life of a tolerably decent layman. And a feeling that a minister was a mere preacher of morals naturally led to a state of things wherein the clergyman's life was that of an amiable country gentleman. Then followed the Evangelical Movement which, from its imperfect grasp of the mystery of the Incarnation, was never able to realise the idea of a visible Church. It was not to be ex-

pected that its authors should take a high view of this subject. Personal qualifications for edifying would take the places of the deeper fitnesses for the priesthood in this system, and hence the sacrifice of the prayers to the sermon, and the subordination of the Altar to the Pulpit.

But now the clergy, as a body, have awakened to a feeling of the sacredness of their order. An enlightened public opinion, as well as their own consciences, expect more of them now than would have satisfied the last age. Earnestness and zeal are, thanks be to GOD, no longer regarded as impertinences and anachronisms—we find young men devoting themselves to the service of the Altar with the one desire of the glory of GOD in the salvation of souls. We may not yet have arrived at such a spirit as is desirable: there are still degrees in self-dedication that our younger brethren have not yet attained to, but still there is much to encourage us—there is much in the conduct of the lately-ordained to smite the consciences of us, their elders—there is much that augurs well for the increased efficiency of the Church, which must end, we may humbly pray, in the salvation of many souls for whom CHRIST died, and in the restoration of unity in His torn and mangled Body.

It is to meet the wants which this improved state of clerical morals has created that this translation is given to the members of our communion. It is a product of the Church of France, and unites that tone of elegant high breeding with sincere and genuine piety which so markedly distinguish the works of Fenelon, and the other luminaries of the Gallican Church. The author, Arvisenet, was a priest of the Diocese of Langres, Vicar General of Troyes, and was the author of *Le Froment des Elus*, and some other little devotional books. It was at first published anonymously, and its merits made it well known, even without the recommendation of the author's name.

The Editions vary much. Some have much additional matter which the others are deficient in, and the order of the chapters is not the same. In this translation, I have been careful to exclude whatever might tend to impair its usefulness among our clergy; at the same time, I have not thought myself at liberty to make more changes

than this:—for instance, I have not altered, to any material degree, the rules for the regulation of the pastor's private life—though the relaxation of the rule of celibacy in our communion must necessarily modify what has there been written.

Some chapters are missed out entirely. They were those which had reference to the distinctive doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church—such as the chapter De Summo Romano Pontifice, capite visibili Ecclesiæ, Christi in terris vicario, that De Annuo Secessu, or that De Sincerâ Devotione erga Beatissimam Virginem Mariam: and also the preliminary address to the Gallican clergy, with the devotions at the end.

The first part of this translation was done in the month of October, 1847, at a very solemn season; the latter half has been since rendered into English by the Rev. Joseph Haskoll, Canon of S. Ninian's, Perth, to whom I beg to express my sincere thanks. I must also record my gratitude to that distinguished artist, W. Dyce, Esq., R.A., whose beautiful Frontispiece is a worthy production of the purest pencil in Britain.

In conclusion, I crave the prayers of all those into whose hands this work may fall, beseeching them to remember me constantly therein, that nothing in this work may do any harm, and that our good Lord may regard not our unworthiness, but overrule our poor efforts, to the glory of His great and holy Name, and to the salvation of the souls for whom He poured out His life-blood.

A. P. F.

Brechin,
Easter, 1853.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

After twenty years—years most eventful in the history of the Western Church—a new edition of this work is called for. It may be said to be a long time for one edition to be sold, but then it must be remembered that the beautiful Latin original may be had at about one half of the price of the translation.

Indeed it is a matter of thankfulness that the book has been found so useful as to be required again. Since the date of its publication many useful manuals for the devotional use of the clergy have been put forth, with the happy consequences that a much more extended circle of readers employ them. It is impossible to measure such a thing as the deepening of the religious life of the clergy, but, so far as appearances go, there is little doubt that there has been a great development of the sacerdotal spirit among the clergy, and that in theory at least a greater number appreciate their position as the Clerus Domini. It is to be hoped that many also take a commensurate estimate of the solemn obligations which lie on them as such.

One great means of grace to them has been the establishment in the Church of England of the system of Clerical Retreats. So long ago as 1860, in a charge which I addressed to my clergy as Diocesan I urged upon them the institution of this excellent practice.

Extract from Charge delivered at Brechin on Aug. 1, 1860.

"Another point to which I wish to direct your attention is the necessity of securing some means of retirement from the

world for a time, in order to commune with your own hearts and be still. Occupied as we all are in looking after the souls of others, we are too apt to neglect our own salvation. The constant distractions, the necessary occupations of our callings, the very fact that the Sunday is no day of rest to us, make it very beneficial that we should have some time for quiet thought and prayer, lest having preached to others we ourselves should be cast away. Where the clergy have the time and opportunity it would be well for them to devote certain days to solitude, fasting, and prayer, with special reference to their own souls; and I can conceive no seasons fitter for this purpose than the Ember seasons, which have from the fourth century been specially set apart for prayer for the clerical estate. And whereas we are assured that when two or three are gathered together in the Name of our LORD, He is in the midst of them, a combination of several of the brethren for this purpose could not be without the most excellent results.

"In England, with the sanction of one of the most devoted Prelates of her Church, it has been the custom for some years back for several of the clergy annually to join together at a stated place to spend a few days in religious exercises; and I have reason to believe that this is attended with the most satisfactory results. They begin the day early with Holy Communion, attend both services in church, and pass the rest of the day between listening to short and touching addresses suited to their condition, and in praying both in common and in private. The subjects placed before them are not subjects of controversy, or even of theological learning, nor of the practice of the clerical state, but such things as refer to our direct relation to Almighty GOD, as deepen and foster within us spiritual-mindedness, and generally as affect our inward lives in the respective ways of purification, illumination, and union with GOD. A due time is given to solitude and to quietness; and thus it is hoped that in a short time a very powerful influence of no transient effect is exercised upon the whole inner nature.

"If these things commend themselves to your consciences, it would be well if you would take counsel together, whether anything of this nature were feasible among ourselves. I am aware that there are many special hindrances which do not exist among our brethren in England: but still I do think that some method might be struck out which might have a specially good effect upon us—especially at the present time, when in spite of ourselves some of the sorenesses of the late controversy may still be hanging about us."

It is gratifying to know how heartily since the charge was delivered many of the clergy have entered into the spirit of this advice, and it is with special reference to Retreats that the translation of this book is called for. I believe that experience has shown that no book is found so useful for reading during meals on these occasions as Arvisenet's Memoriale Vitæ Sacerdotalis.

May it be blest to the increase of the sense of clerical responsibility, and to the comfort of those who are studying to live up to their ordination vows.

DUNDEE,
Festival of the Conversion of S. Paul, 1873.

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SOLEMN WARNINGS

OF

THE GREAT SHEPHERD JESUS CHRIST.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE VOCATION TO THE SACERDOTAL STATE, AND THE SACRED MINISTRY.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. O, how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou LORD of Hosts! My soul hath a desire and longing to enter into Thy courts.

O, how good and joyful a thing it is to worship Thee in Thy Tabernacle: to sing and to praise Thee!

How good it is to tell of Thy righteousness, and to preach repentance for the remission of sins!

How good it is to teach all nations and to baptize, to multiply Thy servants and Thine handmaidens, to teach, to make perfect, and to sanctify! Who will grant unto me, my GOD, thus to put all the world under Thee, and to make all the earth praise Thee, and sing unto Thee; so that all flesh may bless Thy holy Name, that every creature may serve Thee?

The Voice of the Beloved.

2. It is true, My son, if thou desirest the pastoral office, thou desirest a good thing: thou seekest after a great dignity.

But attend diligently:

this dignity is great: it exposeth also to great ruin. Wherefore, however ardently thy soul longeth for this, see that thou presume not to take this honour, except thou be called by Me as was Aaron.

Neither did he, nor did my Apostles, choose Me: but I chose them, and placed them that they might bring forth fruit with patience.

The sheep are Mine, the sheepfold is Mine, I am Myself the door-keeper: it is My place to open the door.

He alone to whom I shall open shall come in rightly, shall go out securely, and find pasture. But he that entereth in by any way except by Me, the same is a thief and a robber: he will hurt both himself and My sheep also.

In truth, My son, he that would come after Me, that he may be made a fisher of men, should know that this is not in the power of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but in the will of Me that show mercy and that choose.

Be thou filled with fear and trembling at My Sanctuary, My son. Clean though thou mayest be, if thou drawest near when not called, then thou drawest near rashly; thou runnest into the sin of Uzzah, and exposest thyself to his punishment.

3. And verily, My son, is not the burden of the Priesthood, is not the burden of the pastoral care, one to be dreaded even by angelic shoulders?

And how wilt thou be able to bear it, except I place My hand underneath: except I strengthen thee with My special grace?

Dost thou not know, My son, that I promise not such helps except to those who are called by Me?

Be not thou, therefore, like unto them who are exalted not by Me, but by themselves. I know them not, My son; I build not with them, and therefore their labour is but lost that build.

I keep not their sheepfold, and therefore do they work in vain that keep it. I do not command them to let down their nets, and therefore toiling all the night of this world they take nothing.

I protect them not against them that war, and therefore they are weak, and fall; therefore they go astray and perish.

4. Use all diligence, therefore, My son, to make thy calling and election sure. If thou be not most careful about this, all thy life long thou wilt be in trouble: not knowing whether thou hast come in by the door, whether thou art going on according to the will of GOD; whether thou wilt be assisted by thy GOD in the greatest of all acts; whether thou mayest not be rejected by thy GOD from the very function of the Priesthood.

But if sure of thy calling, thou hast come to the Priesthood, and undertaken the office of a pastor, quiet and at ease thou wilt walk in the midst of dangers: knowing that those whom I have called, I direct, I lead, and defend.

Joyfully and faithfully wilt thou fulfil thy duties: believing that in so doing thou wilt always do what is well-pleasing unto Me.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. It is true, O good LORD. The wish to serve Thee in the Priesthood presseth upon me: but how to do it I find not, except Thou invite and teach me.

Vouchsafe, therefore, to make Thy will known to me: O my GOD, show me whether Thou hast chosen me.

The Voice of the Beloved.

6. By the following means, My son, thou mayest know My will and thine own calling.

Above all, seek, ask, knock: that is to say, call upon Me, the light of the world, humbly, earnestly, and perseveringly, that sense may be given to thine understanding.

Retire awhile into solitude; so that there seriously examining thyself, and being apart from earthly things, thou mayest ask of Me the more devoutly, and the more attentively listen to My answers.

And because that I am wont to lead men by means of men, seek thou advice from some wise and holy man.

And to this wise man, that he may the more accurately judge and define, lay open candidly the secrets of thy conscience, thine acts, passions, desires, intentions.

Have nothing before thine eyes, My son, except My glory and thine own salvation. This purest star will direct thy footsteps.

Consider what state thou wouldest wish that thou hadst observed, if thou wert just about to die.

Diligently observe all the gifts of thy mind, all the inclinations of thine heart.

Consider whether they be such as the holy and high estate of the Priesthood requireth, such as the perilous duty of a pastor of souls demandeth.

Beware especially lest Satan deceive thee, by purposely persuading thee that thou seekest indeed for the good work of the Presbytery: whereas thou doest it for the sake of filthy lucre, from a desire of ease, from a wish for dignity and high estate. For from such an inducement many enter the Sanctuary, but to their destruction.

7. But if, the matter being thus well weighed, thou perceive thyself to be free from any grave charge, either on account of thine innocency being not well preserved, or from repentance not duly performed:

If thou see that by prudent and holy men thou art thought fit and proper for the duties of the Church:

If thou acknowledge thyself disposed and led by an inward inclination to undertake them:

If thou perceive that thou art drawn to the Priesthood and to the cure of souls by a pure and not by a corrupt intention:

If, above all, thy Bishop call thee, and wish to receive thee to the Ministry: or, at least, when thou art trembling at the Sanctuary, shall bid thee come in with confidence:

Then know, My son, that My will is made manifest unto thee: then promptly, without any further hesitation or delay, give thyself up to thy calling.

With humility indeed; but inasmuch as thou art unwilling only through a holy fear, do not pertinaciously refuse.

Draw near, My son, draw near with confidence: knowing that since I have called thee, I will have respect unto thy poverty and mean estate.

Despair not, be not faint-hearted: but trust, not on thyself, but on Me, who will work in thee.

8. But if, My son, thou hast now taken on thee the honour of the sacred Priesthood, and undertaken the pastoral office, and, bethinking thyself, thou observe

that thou hast rashly entered My Sanctuary:

Either because thou hadst not befitting purity and sanctity: or because thou wast without the requisite talents: or because thou wast drawn by a desire of temporal things, and not by a thirst for My glory:

O, My son, grieve and lament. Verily, thou hast gone astray as a sheep that is lost: verily, thou hast sinned a grievous sin.

Bring forth, therefore, bring forth fruits meet for repentance.

What hath been wanting on thy part hasten thou to supply, taking counsel of some wise man: after that, direct all things to My glory, and follow it out in fear and with love.

And so be of good courage: knowing that with GOD it is not impossible for thee at length to become a vessel of His choice.

Verily, My son, I, who will that no one should perish, will show thee mercy.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE PRIESTLY STATE.

The Voice of the Master.

1. What is man, My son, and for what was he made? Surely that he should fear GOD and keep His Commandments, and adore Him and serve Him alone.

What art thou, My son, and for what wast thou made a Priest: certainly that thou shouldst take the lead among men in this most excellent work, that thou shouldst make Me to be feared, adored, and worshipped by them. O great dignity! O mighty majesty!

I am in heaven, My son, and the sons of men upon earth: and thou art intermediate between Me and them, that thou shouldst guide them in My name, and that they should obey thee as Me. I am GOD the Creator, men are My creatures: and thou art placed over them, that thou mightest concern thyself that they should do their duty to Me.

I am the Father of light, men are in darkness: and thou art the candlestick between us, that by thee the true light may shine.

I am the bestower of heavenly gifts, they are needy: and thou art the steward, that to every one by thee grace may be given.

I am the most Holy Lord, they are sinners: and thou art the go-between, that by thee they may be reconciled to Me.

I am the Father of the only-begotten Son from all eternity, men are to be adopted as sons now: thou art their father on earth, that by thy means they may be adopted in heaven.

I am to be honoured by sacrifices, men have no whole-burnt offering: thou art between us, having ready a most holy victim, the body of My Son, wherewith to satisfy My rights and the debts of men.

I am a burning flame, and men must be enkindled on the earth: thou art the means whereby they may be inflamed.

I am the Chief Physician, men are weak: and thou art between us the servant possessing My medicaments to give unto each one.

I, to conclude, am the Lord of the flock in heaven: the flock is on earth: thou art the shepherd over it, that by thee it may increase and be multiplied.

2. There is no dignity nor power, My son, under heaven which can be compared to thine: thou art of the gods: thou art of the sons of the Highest.

The dignity of the king is human, that of the priest, divine. Honour and power forsake the dying king: a priesthood for ever awaits the dying priest.

A mighty king conquers his enemies: but a true priest overcomes the world.

A king can imprison the body and otherwise punish: a priest can bind the soul itself.

A king can release captives from the chains on his body: a priest can free souls from the power of the devil, and from the snares of sin.

A king can do nothing but on earth; a priest has power in heaven. The one has the treasures of earth, the other holds those of heaven.

Kings send gifts to other kings; but the priest offers sacrifice to the God of heaven.

His voice pierces heaven,

whence he draws down graces: there he propitiates GOD, and moves Him.

His sentence precedes the sentence of GOD: what he binds or looses on earth shall be bound or loosed in heaven.

O, My son! recognize thy dignity; and since thou hast been made partaker of the divine nature, do not, by conversation unworthy of thy kind, return unto thy first vileness.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. LORD, what am I that Thou shouldst have been mindful of me, and shouldst have bestowed so much upon me?

Behold, when I was dust and ashes, I was made a man of GOD, Thy minister according to the dispensation of Thy grace.

O, most loving FATHER, how much love do I owe for that love wherewith Thou didst first love, and choose, and seal me.

How greatly should I abase myself for the favour wherewith Thou didst deign to raise me from the dust, to exercise my holy office.

I am vile, unclean, ignorant, imperfect, blind, ever prone to evil; shall so wretched a one as I be the ambassador of Thine infinite Majesty?

O, my GOD, holiness itself, wisdom, goodness, glory, immensity! since I am so exalted by Thee, how should I not be confused and tremble?

Comfort me, O LORD with Thy grace, that I may willingly bear so heavy a burthen.

Deign, O LORD, so to compose my mind within, so to direct my ways without, that I may be a true follower of Thy most holy SON, and representative to the truly faithful of Him who sent me, as Thou didst send Him.

The Voice of the Beloved.

4. Thou shalt be a follower of Him, My son, if, as He willed and strove, thou wilt will and strive, to seek and to save that which was lost.

Come, therefore, My son, come and follow Him: come and be, after Him, a fisher of men. Preach the Gospel to the poor, make the deaf hear the word, make the blind see the true light: make the dumb speak the praises of GOD: make the lame to walk in the way of His Commandments: bring back the wanderers into the

way of righteousness: walk so that glory be given to God, salvation to man.

My Son poured forth His Blood for these; do thou give thyself wholly for them.

5. Open wide thy heart, My son. Call all to the knowledge of truth and of salvation: compel all to come into My House, that it may be full.

Try to draw to Me, without distinction, the rich and the poor, the noble and the low-born, the wise and the fools, the servant and the lord, the man and the woman.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE NECESSITY OF PERFECTION IN PRIESTS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, behold thou art made a priest; thou hast not lightened thy burthen: in addition to what all have to bear, thou hast taken up a weight almost beyond an angel's shoulders. Thou art now bound by a tighter chain of discipline.

Walk, therefore, in My sight, and be perfect. Be holy, for I am holy, who hallow thee. Be perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

2. You err, My son, you err, if you think that I expect perfection from those only who, by religious vows, have left all things—have consecrated themselves to Me, and absolutely quitted the world.

They, indeed, are bound to perfection; but seeing they have left the world, and are no longer concerned in its offences, they can the more easily keep themselves unstained, and so can serve Me in holiness and righteousness, without such sharp contentions and such violent struggles.

But to you, who desire to become better, there is need of great diligence. You are in the world: you are in the midst of dangers: you have enemies on the right hand and on the left: and yet you are bound to pass unscathed, to re-

main righteous, nay, daily to become more justified and sanctified.

Those bound by a religious vow, should burn; you, who are a priest, must both burn and shine.

Those bound by a vow, must preserve their vessel in sanctification; but you, who are the salt of the earth, must preserve the earth, that is, mankind, from corruption.

They must have a right judgment for their own sake; you for yourself and your sheep. Be their example.

Listen, therefore, My son: I said to thee, and again I repeat it, be perfect.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. LORD, I know truly that the very stars are unclean in Thy sight: how much more man, who is corrupt and a worm.

How, therefore, shall I be so perfect, as becomes Thy ministers, daily waiting at Thy table.

O, how pure must be the mouth, how clean the body, how perfect the heart, into which Purity, Holiness, Majesty itself, entereth!

And wherefore do I not tremble, O LORD, when I recollect that Aaron was bound to be holy and perfect, who was but intrusted with the ark of the covenant, and the vessels of the tabernacle; but I am ordained for Thee Thyself, O my GOD. He had to do with the shewbread only: I have to handle and to consecrate the bread of angels.

Aaron, with his tribe, was separated from the rest, on account of the weak and beggarly elements: shadows of better things to come.

How much more must I be separated from the rest by holiness of life, who am consecrated to the good things shadowed forth by the former, to the truth prefigured, to very mysteries of GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

4. This do, My son. I have elected thee from the world: I have separated thee from the world: I am become the portion of thine inheritance and of thy cup. Thou art in the world, thou must not be of the world.

Do not occupy thyself, then, in worldly employments and thoughts: do not occupy thyself in any desires nor hindrances.

Care only for what is Mine: rest in My service:

bend thyself to the treatment of heavenly subjects: let thy conversation be in heaven.

5. Behold, I have left thee on earth among men, but why? Attend, My son: to save them, to kindle the love of Me in their hearts, to water them with My grace, to bring them to heaven with thee.

Thou art on the earth, but thou art of heaven: thou belongest to heaven, thou shouldst be the heaven of souls, so that as natural bodies grow and fructify by the influence of the heavens, so should souls by the influence of thee.

Be to them a high heaven, by contemplation; a wide heaven, by love; a bright heaven, by wisdom;

A heaven regular in its motion, by obedience; serene, by constancy; fruitful, by instruction;

Glittering, by good example; beneficent, by mercy; pure, by holiness.

So I, the GOD of heaven, shall be thy GOD: ever with thee wheresoever thou stretchest thyself; thou shalt plant and water—I will give increase.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE POSSIBILITY OF PERFECTION IN THIS WORLD.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. O LORD, I have heard Thy speech and was afraid: I listened to Thy words and feared.

Thou hast said by Thy SON, Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect. O height! how can I attain unto it?

Grant me, O LORD, the wings of a dove, and I will fly. If I remain to myself, my soul will remain abased, and my belly will cleave to the dust.

How shall I break down all those passions that continually war against my soul? How shall I overcome so many vices daily meeting me in the face? How shall I foster so many virtues repugnant to the law in my members?

Behold, Thou orderest me to be pure in the midst

of corruption : in the midst of praises to be humble, in the midst of riches to be poor, in the midst of sins to be holy, in the midst of enemies to be unconquered.

Thou commandest me that, living in the world, I am not to be of the world : that, resting on earth, I am to be of heaven.

O LORD, I have heard Thy speech and was afraid: I listened to Thy words and feared.

The Voice of the Master.

2. My son, fear not. It is here the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

The burden of the Priesthood is great, but so is the grace of Him that layeth it on. I, the Almighty, have placed it upon thee : I, the Almighty, will aid thee, that thou mayest bear it more easily.

Is anything hard for Me? or am I like one that speaketh and acteth not?

Dost thou fear enemies? I am GOD of hosts. Dost thou dread dangers? I bring them forth of them that trust in Me.

I protected Abraham in Chaldæa, Joseph in Egypt, Lot in Sodom, Job among the unbelievers, Daniel in Babylon.

I sanctified Borromeo, Sales, Vincent, and countless others, who now rejoice in My glory, in the midst of sinners.

Behold, my son, I willed it that all things, in the midst of a perverse nature, should be holy, that thou mayest learn that no one, in any calling, need despond.

Wilt thou, My son, do what in thee lies? I will supply, I will direct, I will make perfect.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. Behold, I come, O LORD, that I may do Thy will. I wish to be perfect. But great grace is required for this.

Thou promisest that to Thy friend : but I am unworthy, who have so often deserved Thine anger ; how can I surely expect the gift Thou givest to Thy friends?

O LORD, perhaps it had been better for me, if, flying the offences of the world, on which Thou hast denounced a curse, I had gone into the desert, and escaped these crushing responsibilities.

The Voice of the Master.

4. My son, what is this? Is a light placed under a bushel, or under a bed? is it not to be placed in a candlestick?

My son, thou hast not chosen Me, but I have chosen thee, that thou mightest go and bring forth fruit with patience. I promise thee grace.

Thou sayest thou art unworthy; know, My son, that grace is not given according to desert, else were it not grace.

Dost thou love Me? feed My sheep: by feeding them thou showest thy love; and to them that love Me, all things work together for good, even dangers and foes.

Feed My sheep. By feeding thou wilt love, by loving thou wilt advance and become perfect.

Feed My sheep. By feeding them thou wilt imitate the good Shepherd, JESUS, My SON.

They are perfect and predestined, whom I have foreknown shall be conformed to His image.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE MEANS OF ACQUIRING PERFECTION.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, dost thou wish to be perfect? Open wide thy mouth, and I will fill it. Hunger and thirst after righteousness, and thou shalt be filled. Wish, and the grace shall be given thee. Be a man of desires, and the Spirit of Wisdom shall come upon thee.

If thou ardently desirest perfection, with a vigorous desire, thou shalt, as if spurred on, go from strength to strength, until thou come to the height of Mount Sion, where thou shalt enjoy intimate union with thy GOD.

Desire it earnestly, determine to pursue it fervently, and that desire and determination renew day by day, hour by hour. Thus soon shalt thou be kindled—soon inflamed.

2. If thou wouldst be perfect, try, in all thy work, to please Me. Let a pure

intention of pleasing Me and of My love go before every act of thine.

If thou ever takest care to act from the desire of pleasing Me, I shall know that thou lovest Me with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

Then thou shalt love and live perfectly, for he that loveth fulfilleth the law.

Take heed, My son, that thou do not thy righteousness before men, that thou mayest be seen of them, and have praise of them: thou wilt receive praise therein, but thou wilt cast away perfection.

Take heed, lest thou do My work negligently. He is not blessed, but cursed, who doeth the work of the LORD negligently.

3. If thou wouldst be perfect, take heed that thou ever look upon Me as present, and that thou art ever placed in My sight.

Recollect, ever recollect, that I am the GOD who seeth all things, and searcheth the reins and the heart.

If, then, thou speakest, thinkest, desirest, doest anything, speak it, think it, desire it, do it as before Me.

Thus, like Abraham, Enoch, Noah, and Hezekiah, thou wilt walk in truth, and in a perfect heart before Me.

4. If thou wouldst be perfect, My son, take heed that thou conduct thee in thy work as if thou wert about to die—as if it were the last act of thy life.

Oh, if thou woulast do this, with what fervour wouldst thou celebrate the blessed Eucharist! with what tears wouldst thou bewail thy sins! with what attention wouldst thou pray!

O, My son, I do not ask great and impossible things of thee, that thou shouldst be perfect. Thou art a priest: thou oughtest to pray, to examine thy conscience, to minister the Sacraments, to read the prayers, to study, and to pray. Do this perfectly, and thou wilt be perfect.

5. If thou wishest to be perfect, think often, My son, to what thou art arrived, and wherefore thou art made a priest. Is it not to please Me, and to work out thy salvation?

Excite thyself with this thought: so excited, act upon it: ever begin: shake off lukewarmness: overcome thy passions: rein in thine inordinate affections.

Thus, ever striving at

perfection, perfection shall be imputed unto thee.

If thou shouldst fall—if thou shouldst not advance as thou wishest—be not down-hearted.

Only humble thyself, and grieve. It is perfection to find thyself imperfect.

6. If thou wouldst be perfect, go down, My son, into the depths of thy soul, and there, in My presence, search out in sincerity the inner parts of thy heart.

See and diligently consider the stumbling-blocks that impede thee, that keep thee back, and prevent thee making progress: put these away.

See what is the origin of thy vices: for all have some radical head.

Behold Goliath! slay him, and thou hast conquered; that is, occupy all thy care in rooting out this capital vice.

7. Behold, My son, merchants greedy of gain: see how, day by day, they add something to their treasures. So do thou add somewhat to the treasures thou layest up in heaven.

See how painters finish up the pictures which they have painted. So do thou correct thy vices—increase thy virtues.

They do it, My son, that they may obtain a corruptible crown: thou an incorruptible.

The Voice of the Disciple.

8. Lord, grant that, as Thou commandest, I may improve.

Grant that I may examine myself without deceit or flattery.

God grant that what I am may ever displease me, that I may arrive at that which I am not. Grant that I may not go backwards, nor stray, nor stand still on the way. For I know that if I say, "It is enough," I perish.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE SMALL NUMBER OF THE ELECT.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. O, My son! how few are the priests who follow the narrow way! how few who enter through the strait gate! O how many have turned aside from My paths.

Come and see: certainly, they are out of the narrow way who, puffed up and swollen with their own empty knowledge, despise others, and desire to lord it in the heritage.

Now they are lifted up like the cedars of Libanus, hereafter shall they fall with Lucifer into hell.

Neither do those ambitious persons enter the narrow way, who, loving themselves and not Me, nor souls, beg for themselves benefices and honours: who hunt them, and accumulate them: who are little careful of their fitness—little anxious of their obligations and duties.

Verily, as they rashly hasten to rise to the heaven of dignities, they shall fall down confused into the abyss of torments.

They also are off the path who, serving mammon and not Me, seek nothing in the heritage but filthy lucre.

Truly, they have the purse of Judas: they shall perish, also, with the traitor.

2. Certainly, they do not enter through the narrow gate who, mixing themselves up too much in the affairs of the world, do not give themselves leisure for prayer, for study, or for the care of their own or their neighbour's salvation, but are occupied from morning to night in law-suits, in earthly employments, and business.

Truly, these, losing by death that earth which they have loved with all their hearts, shall not obtain the heaven they never sought.

They are without the narrow road who, given up to silly conversation and amusement, are all the day idle.

Truly, when the LORD of the vineyard cometh, He will not give them their hire.

Nor shall they enter the

narrow gate who, pledged to chastity, are not afraid to give themselves up, by *thought*, *word*, and *deed*, to uncleanness.

Truly, they, filled with sacrilege and filth, shall not be received into My kingdom, where nothing that is unclean may enter.

3. Without doubt, they are not in the path, who are of the world, who love the world, who speak of the world, who delight in the vanities of the world, who are intoxicated with the pleasures of the world, and recreated with its joys.

Verily, since they have rejoiced with the world, they shall not be able hereafter to reign with CHRIST.

Furthermore, the lukewarm shall not enter by the strait gate, whose consciences are only alarmed by weighty sins.

Verily, they shall not be admitted to My heavenly feast who provoke Me to spue them from My mouth.

Neither shall they be received who, spending the goods of My patrimony on splendour, vanity, or pleasure, are niggardly and unkind to My poor.

Verily, I shall say unto them in My wrath, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.

They also are not in the way who, appointed for the correction of My people, give to My sheep an example of sin.

Verily, those, by whom offences come, shall perish as the slayers of souls.

Nor shall they enter the narrow gate who, following not the holy rules, but corrupt customs, desire not nor strive to be stricter than the laxest.

Truly, they shall not be crowned unless they have striven lawfully.

4. They also are beside the way who, not obeying those set over them, and not attending to their commands, hear not the Church which commands through these.

Verily, they have despised Me Myself, and shall be condemned in judgment of My FATHER.

Nor shall they enter by the narrow way who do not teach My people, who do not accuse of sin: who listen to the details of sin unwillingly, carelessly, or inattentively: who absolve the unworthy: who officiate without devotion: who communicate without preparation.

Verily, they are accursed who do My work negligently, or leave it undone.

They, truly, are beside the way who suffer My temple to be disgraced with rags and filth, and have no zeal for My house.

Verily, these love Me not, and shall have no part in the kingdom which the FATHER hath prepared for them that love Me.

O, My son, how many priests are there in name! how few in deed!

How many priests are there in outward garb! how few in inward perfection! how few burning and shining lights!

How rare is true innocency! How rare is perfect penitence! How rare is pure love! How rare is sincere lowliness!

How rare is unwearied labour! how rare continual prayer! how rare true holiness!

Strive, My son, to enter in at the narrow gate. Take heed that by good works thou mayest make thy calling sure.

5. Few are chosen. Let the fear of this truth pierce thy flesh.

Fear, lest if there be few saved among the sheep, there be fewer among the pastors.

Fear, for the Priest passed by, the Levite passed by, while the Samaritan was praised.

Fear, My son, for many that are last shall be first, and the first last.

Fear, for many shall come from afar, and sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven: while the children of the kingdom are cast out into outer darkness.

O! if this truth had reached to thy heart, thou wouldest, without doubt, not have sinned, but have worked out thy salvation with fear and trembling.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF THE SINS OF PRIESTS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, what is the greatest sin in Mine eyes? Verily, it is the sin of My priests.

On account of this I fill up My fury, I pour out the wrath of Mine indignation; on account of this I kindle a fire in Sion.

The Voice of the Disciple.

2. O LORD! I will speak unto Thee, who am but dust and ashes.

I know, O LORD, that Thou art not a regarder of persons: that there is neither barbarian nor stranger, Greek nor Arabian, man or woman, in Thy sight.

I know that all are one in CHRIST JESUS; wherefore, then, art Thou more angry with a delinquent priest? wherefore dost Thou spare him less?

The Voice of the Beloved.

3. My son, it is true that there is no acceptance of persons with Me; nor is the rich more than the poor, the prince than the subject, the wise than the simple, in My sight.

But I am just, and know how to apportion the weight of iniquity, to judge, to punish.

It is just that I should be more angry with a delinquent priest, because his iniquity is greater.

4. Hear, My son, of what sort is his crime. It is, truly, a great crime for one of the people to despise the commands of the best of Kings, to rise in rebellion against Him, and to arm himself in opposition.

But it is worse if the minister of the King, and the administrator of His affairs, does so.

Understand, My son, this parable. When a priest sins, he despises My commands: refuses to obey Me. Rising against Me, insolently he says, I will not serve Thee.

And what is that priest who thus kicks against Me, and rebels? He is My minister: the steward of My mysteries. How great is the iniquity in My sight!

5. It is a great sin, when a son, withdrawing himself from the government of the best of fathers, goes into a far country, that he may live riotously. But it is a greater crime, if the spouse leaves her lawful husband, to cleave unto another man.

Understand, My son, this parable. The soul of the priest bound herself to Me by her ordination vow; but she, by sin, left Me to join herself to My most hated foes: the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

O, most faithless one! O, adulterous spouse, who preferredst sin, even the Devil himself, to thy Divine Spouse! O, wickedness, very great in My sight!

6. It was a great crime in the Jews to demand My death, and to lay violent hands upon Me.

But the crime of Judas was greater, who, being My Apostle, yet willingly sold Me, and betrayed Me to them.

This, My son, is no parable; but it is the truth I speak unto thee.

Verily, thou knowest how great is the sin of Christians, when, by sin, they crucify Me afresh, and put Me to an open shame.

Understand, then, how greater is the sin of the priest, when, by sin, he lays violent hands upon Me. O, wickedness, very great in My sight!

7. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, I endure much from other sinners and godless men; but I suffer no greater injury than from sinful priests.

Wonder not, then, if against them the anger of My righteousness be the more kindled: if it calls in its anger that death may come upon them, and that they may go down quick into hell.

I endure Mine enemies cursing Me: I cannot away with these I know, being hostile to Me.

8. Let, then, unrighteous priests tremble, for I will judge them more strictly and inexorably than others.

They commit wickedness in the land of the saints: they shall not behold My glory, but shall endure painful torments.

Let them recollect Nadab and Abihu. They were My ministers: I saw them placing strange fire in their censers, and straightway I sent down fire from heaven and consumed them.

Let them recollect Uzzah,

the Levite. I saw him touching the ark of the covenant in an irreverent manner, and straightway I struck him, while I spared the Philistines who rashly handled it.

Let them recollect the sons of Eli. I saw them transgressing, and I slew them.

O, My son, do thou thyself remember and fear My judgments: tremble at Mine anger: watch and flee from sin.

The Voice of the Disciple.

9. Open, O LORD, open my heart, and pour into it more and more a horror of sin itself, and a hatred of iniquity.

Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, that I may not sin against Thee.

Yet see, O LORD, my weakness, so inclined to wickedness. I am a priest: I am also a man, conceived in sin.

Assist me: guide me: hold my right hand: and lead me in Thy will.

Behold, LORD! the rage of Satan, mine adversary. Behold, he roareth as a lion going about seeking whom he may devour. Save me from the enemy.

My GOD! I flee to Thee. Except Thou keep me, I shall watch in vain: I shall in vain strive to keep myself.

In Thee do I put my trust: protect me: defend me: and I shall not perish in my weakness.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE EVILS THAT ARISE FROM THE BAD LIVES OF PRIESTS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, with wailing I have wailed, and the tears are on My Cheek; for My friend, whom I placed over all My goods, has become cruel to Me.

Behold, My son, and see if any sorrow be like unto My sorrow.

I bought My sheep of My FATHER, at the price of My blood; these I love with an everlasting love, and there-

fore I committed them to My servant, that in My name, and in My love, he might govern, tend, and save.

I said unto him: Friend, I entrust to thee these, My sheep, lead them forth, go before them, know them, give thy life for them.

I have other sheep, which are not yet of the fold, which I commit to thee. Friend, lead them in, so that there may be one fold and one shepherd.

I said to My sheep: Follow this shepherd: know his voice: follow not a stranger, but flee from him.

2. What has taken place, My son? That servant, to whom I had so lovingly committed My sheep, has become like the hireling, to whom the sheep do not belong.

He saw the wolf coming, and left the sheep and fled: and the wolf came and ravined and dispersed My sheep.

Wherefore that wicked servant has become a thief and a robber; and he slew and lost those sheep for whom I came, that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

3. Hear, My son, how that very wicked servant has become, in My flock, a most savage wild beast, destroying it.

He ought to have led My sheep into the fertile pastures of faith: to have taught, to have catechised, to have preached.

He neglected this: therefore was there hunger. In a short space I saw that the flock was lean, and I could hardly recognise them.

He should have visited My sheep, and attended to the nature of each one, by assiduous personal intercourse.

He did not do so: in a short time wounds and disease increased and multiplied, and many sheep died, because there was no one to care for them.

He should have watched over My sheep, that they should not be scattered, and should have sought for the strayed ones; but he did not do so, nor attend, and they were scattered.

These sheep are souls, My son, left in ignorance, sin, and error, by the evil priest.

O, unfaithful shepherd! O, wicked servant! O, shepherd leaving My flock!

4. This was the beginning of My sorrow, My son. Hear still further, and bewail with Me: the wicked

priest devoured My sheep and slew them. He sinned himself and made souls sin also.

They saw him sinning and said: This is the angel of the LORD, knowing good and evil: we should serve GOD no more than he: we should no more keep the commandments: we should no more shun sin.

What then? Is it forbidden to us what is permitted to him? Shall we not do what he doeth? Let us follow him and go in his paths.

Thus, by his example, are souls drawn into sin: thus strengthened in vice and guilt.

5. But there is more, My son: the dregs of the chalice of his cruelty are not yet drained.

Hear, O, hear! and let the heavens be astonished at this, and be very desolate.

My sheep see that his morals suit not his discipline: they soon begin to doubt whether he believes the dogmas he teaches, whether they be true; then they say within themselves, The teacher, the pastor, the apostle, believes them not, why should we believe them? He fears not hell, why should we fear it? Hence, want of faith! Hence, want of piety!

Thus, My son, thus, from a wicked prophet, does pollution go forth upon the earth.

O, priest! not the shepherd but the seducer of My flock. That most wicked one shall restore an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. His soul shall be for the souls of them.

6. O, wicked priests, of how great and how many evils are ye the cause!

What did I not suffer under Judas, your chief, who betrayed Me to the Jews, to be crucified?

What from Arius, who desolated all My Church?

What from so many other priests, the patrons of heresy and schism?

O, most wicked priests, by whom so many offences have come: by whom so many people and nations have gone back from the faith and unity of My Church: unjustly imputing your crimes to My most chaste Spouse!

On account of you, and your guiltiness, the world is smitten with the sword. On account of you, it perishes under the stroke. On account of you, the armies

of the faithful are overcome.

Woe unto you, generation of vipers! The depths of hell shall swallow you up above other sinners. The infernal pit shall open its mouth upon you with fury.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE GOOD THAT ARISES FROM THE HOLY LIVES OF PRIESTS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Blessed is the nation, blessed is the people, to whom the LORD giveth a shepherd according to His heart.

Under his rule, the crooked shall become straight, and the rough smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of the LORD.

The fields shall be filled with richness, the valleys shall laugh and sing, the hills shall be encircled with gladness.

2. Blessed is the world which received twelve Apostles from its most merciful LORD.

Behold, My son, how great is the power, energy, and efficacy of a holy priest. Behold, they were twelve, and their sound hath gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Being lambs, they overcame a world full of wolves; being fishermen, they enlightened, with their doctrine, a world covered with darkness.

Being without staff or arms, they overturned the idols and the temples: being ignorant, they were honoured by the very world itself.

But they were holy, undefiled, full of chastity, constant in prayer, given to the ministry, followers of CHRIST, and filled with His spirit and zeal.

O blessed earth, which had these twelve Apostles! Wretched also is the earth to-day, which perishes under the ministry of so many thousand priests.

3. Blessed was the city of Milan, which, when it abounded in vice and ignorance, obtained a Charles for its pastor.

Charles aroused the clergy and many priests from the dregs of vice, who were translated, as if from death to life, unto the heights of holiness.

He cured the people: and the people that sate in darkness and in the shadow of death, walked in the way of truth and virtue.

The city itself seemed as if entirely renewed. Verily, in many regions Charles destroyed the kingdom of Satan, and wonderfully propagated the empire of CHRIST.

At length he died, filling the whole earth with the fame of his sanctity; and even to this day sanctifying by the incitement of emulation.

Such is the power of a holy priest, that there is nothing can be hid from the heat thereof.

4. Blessed were the men of Chablais, who received a Salesius. How many did he recover from the paths of heresy into the ways of piety! How many did he, by his gentleness, compel to come into the kingdom of heaven!

Blessed were the nations of India, which had a Xavier for their apostle. How many kings, and kingdoms, and people, did he bring into the faith of CHRIST? tongue can hardly tell.

Blessed was France, which obtained a Vincent. How many poor had the gospel preached to them by him! How many godless men were converted! How many blind received sight! How many weak in faith were healed! How many children instructed! How many priests sanctified!

5. My son, see how much a true and holy priest, given to prayer, to the word, and to example, can do.

These are given thee for an example, and they should provoke thee more to advance, than the number of the lukewarm induce thee to relax thine efforts.

See how they fulfilled that ministry which thou thyself hast received, and take heed that thou discharge it in a like manner.

See how they, by their sanctity, drew all eyes upon them: see how they preached the word of GOD: see in what way and how much they preached.

Observe what they were in dress, gesture, and speech: how grave and modest in their manners: how gentle and lowly in their conver-

sation: how mortified and pitiful: how little careful about the things of this world: how ardent about spiritual things.

Observe, how great a hatred of sin existed in them: see how great an emulation of virtue.

Observe, and do thou likewise. Do and teach as they did, and with them thou shalt be great in the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SPIRITUAL AND A WORLDLY PRIEST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, if the Spirit of Him that raised Me up from the dead dwell in thee, He that raised Me up from the dead shall also quicken thy mortal body by His Spirit that dwelleth in thee.

For as many priests as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD, and shall receive the promise of His eternal inheritance.

But they that are not led by the Spirit of GOD, but go after their own lusts, they savour of the things of the flesh.

Those, indeed, who seek in the Priesthood their own things, find the same, but to their own destruction: they now receive their reward, but they lose eternal compensation.

See, then, and consider, My son, with what spirit thou art led. Whether thou art spiritually-minded? or worldly-minded? See, and consider carefully.

For, in truth, the Spirit and the world move men very contradictorily and subtilely: and with difficulty wilt thou find out by which of these two guides thou art led, except thou fully examine thyself.

2. For every priest desireth some good, and pretendeth to some advantage in the sacred ministry; but under the appearance of good many are deceived.

Nature, which is artful, allureth many, ensnareth, and deceiveth.

Hearken, My son, and learn: that thou be not surprised by her, and so deceived.

A worldly priest hath himself for an end, and looketh upon his ministry as an empty thing, except there come to him from it either honour or gain, or some temporal good.

But a spiritual priest, gifted with an upright heart, presseth forward to nothing earthly; but doeth all things purely for the sake of God and men's souls.

3. A worldly priest graspeth at rich benefices: he often complaineth of want, and straitened circumstances.

A spiritual priest committeth himself to God's good will: having food and raiment, he is therewith content.

4. A worldly priest carrieth his burden unwillingly: he feareth labour: he is slothful in study: he goeth not to the pulpit except when compelled: he taketh any regular discipline ill.

Those better than himself, wiser, more learned, more worthy, more rich, he envieth: he cannot endure the advice and the rebukes of his superiors.

But a spiritual priest liveth willingly in labour and in fatigue: he careth not for toils: his ecclesiastical superiors he obeyeth cheerfully: he restraineth his own liberty by the pious bonds of regular discipline.

He desireth to be lord over none: but for the sake of God he is ready to take the last and the lowest place: nay, he judgeth himself unworthy even of the very last.

5. A worldly priest desireth to be known, and to do that whence praise and admiration proceed.

For some supposed piety in him, some learning, or fame, he willingly receiveth honour and reverence.

But a spiritual priest, when he hath done all, attributes faithfully all the glory and honour to God: and for the rest, considereth himself an unprofitable servant.

6. A worldly priest feareth confusion and contempt: obscure offices he disdaineth.

To catechise little children, to instruct the ignorant with simplicity of speech, and to guide them to piety: these things he is ashamed of.

To rebuke the sins of the

powerful, lest they should mock or become his enemies: this he is afraid to do.

But a spiritual priest is made all things to all men: and if from his humble ministry, or from the reproaches of his enemies, contumely come upon him, he rejoiceth to suffer it for the name of JESUS.

7. A worldly priest loveth bodily quiet.

But a spiritual priest cannot be idle: he is ever travailing in faith, until CHRIST be formed in his sheep.

8. A worldly priest, in his house, in his furniture, in his garments, seeketh for costly and fair things: the vile and common he dislikeeth.

But a spiritual priest is satisfied with simple and mean things: he avoideth the more costly and refined.

9. A worldly priest looketh out for a good stipend: he taketh delight in the gifts of his flock.

He is sad if there be no recompense, if gain ceaseth, if any temporal loss ensue.

He is irritated by contradiction, be it ever so little, or by the least injurious word.

But a spiritual priest regardeth eternal things alone: he careth not for temporal matters: he despiseth the world itself.

He is not disturbed except for GOD being offended, or for souls being lost: by no harsh words is he aggrieved.

10. A worldly priest is stingy in giving, close in withholding.

But a spiritual priest, with a willing mind, becometh needy, so that the poor may live: he scattereth abroad, he giveth readily, cheerfully, abundantly.

11. A worldly priest liketh to roam about, to see, to be seen, to enjoy himself, to talk vanity, to amuse himself, to eat and drink delicately.

But a spiritual priest hath regard to GOD and righteousness only: he avoideth those that are of the world: he mortifieth the lusts of the flesh by the spirit.

He is ashamed to appear in public, either idle or wandering about: he loveth solitude and silence.

12. To a worldly priest the meditation of heavenly things is a trouble: pious exercises are a weariness: the saying of a service is a burden.

The one he lightly omitteth: the other he performeth hurriedly and carelessly.

But a spiritual priest, forasmuch as he delighteth in GOD alone, thinketh it a delight indeed to hold converse with Him, by means of the various exercises of devotion.

13. A worldly priest desireth that what he hath done may be well considered.

If he think that he hath conducted his actions well, then he wisheth to get his reward in this world.

And if the Bishop doth not confer on him the reward either of some higher dignity, or of some richer benefice, then he murmureth and complaineth within himself.

But a spiritual priest seeketh for nothing temporal: nor doth he ask for any other reward, as a return, but GOD alone.

14. A worldly priest loveth to be set over the rich and powerful of this world: he is delighted with their praise, their respect, their love, their intimacy, their protection.

But a spiritual priest is not puffed up by reason of the number of great ones placed under him, or devoted to him: nor does he care for any man's station, except there be there also greater virtue.

He regardeth not the persons: rich and poor, powerful and mean, he looketh on all alike.

If any, rather, he favoureth the poor more than the rich: he hath more feeling for the innocent than for the powerful: he loveth to preach the gospel to the poor.

O, blessed, blessed, again and again, My son, is that priest, who is such as this. He, verily, hath received from his GOD a peculiar gift.

For not only of calling, but of election also, he hath the proper seal.

15. O, my son! confess with sincerity: if thou hast considered thyself in this mirror just set before thee, assuredly thou hast been profoundly humbled.

Doubtless, thou hast cried out with shame: woe is me! how worldly am I! how little spiritual!

It is well, My son! and if thou shouldst think otherwise, thou surely wouldst not know thyself.

Be reformed, therefore, dearly beloved, in newness

of spirit: put off the old man: strive, and strive earnestly, that thou mayest become truly spiritual.

But since thou canst not attain unto this without special grace, pray and beseech thy GOD that He would renew a right spirit within thee, and stablish thee with His free spirit.

Inasmuch as thou despisest earthly things, and savourest only of those which are above, so wilt thou exercise thy ministry well.

CHAPTER XI.

OF DEATH.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. What man is that who shall live and not see death? No one, My son; by experience thou hast known that no one shall live for ever.

Thou, therefore, thou, although a Priest, although of the gods, although of the sons of the Highest, shalt perish like other men; and in a day thou thinkest not, and in an hour thou knowest not, and in a way thou canst not tell.

My son, he who sitteth on the pale horse rapidly approaches thee—he whose name is Death; and in a short space thou shalt be among the slain.

Perchance thou seest him not, thou noticest him not, thou thinkest him very far from thee, yet thou art separated from him by one step.

Soon he will tread thee down, and then what will it profit thee if thou shalt have gained the whole world and hast not taken care to save thy soul?

2. Oh! in what way will thine eyes be opened, when thou shalt hear him, who sitteth upon the horse, cry with a terrible voice, "Thine end is come!"

Then the days of the longest life will seem to thee to have declined like a swift shadow.

Then riches, and wealth, and honours, and dignities, and pleasures, and delights, will seem to thee entirely vain and empty.

Then thou wilt confess it

to be madness to place one's hope in those goods which death, in an hour, cometh to take away from the unworthy possessor.

Then thou wilt acknowledge the wisdom of laying up thy treasure only in heaven.

Then thou shalt mourn over the loss of so many graces, and the resistance to so many inspirations.

Then thou shalt grieve that thou hast not made thine election sure, or not panted after the heights of greater perfection.

Then thy sins shall arise, and become in the sight of thine eyes a very great army, and fear and dismay shall come upon thee.

Then thou shalt be disturbed about thy righteousness, and shalt fear much, not knowing whether thou deservest love or hatred.

Then thou shalt be anxious not only about thine own life, but also shalt be so concerning an account of the care of thy sheep.

Then many of thine actions will appear to thee evil, which at other times, from want of laying them to heart, seemed right and good.

In many thou wilt perceive the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, a merely natural inclination; in few wilt thou then find perfection.

3. Then thou wilt see, My son, the folly of society, the vanity of clothing, the pride of possessions, the idleness of days.

Defects in prayer, niggardliness of alms, too great care of thine estate, sins of speech.

Ambitious desires, ill will, languor in pious exercises, faulty confessions, negligence in celebrating the divine service.

Then will come into thy mind the many ignorant not instructed: the many erring not brought back; the many sinners not recalled: the many faint-hearted not comforted:

The many fallen not raised up; the many weak not cured: the many good things neglected: the many evil things permitted.

What shalt thou, wretched one, say? My son, today say, and thou shalt be safe.

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. Say, O death, thy judgment is good! As I would then feel, I would

now feel: as I would then act, I would now act.

I will set my house in order while alive, lest I be unable to do so when dying.

Henceforth I will abstain from all appearance of evil: I will do nothing that may cause me remorse in that dreadful hour.

While I have time, I will do good: I will sow, reap, and gather in, that when the LORD cometh to demand an account of my stewardship, I may appear as a faithful servant, bearing my sheaves with me.

The Voice of the Beloved.

5. But be not, My son, like a man beholding his natural face in a glass, who goeth his way and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he is.

That is to say, let it not be enough for thee, once or twice to ruminate on this wholesome thought of death, and to make a vow of holiness, and then straightway to forget it.

Ruminate constantly upon death, and always stir up fresh desires of being beforehand with death: not at some future time, but now and indeed.

Blessed, truly blessed, is he, who has ever before his eyes the hour of his death.

My Saints knew this, and therefore took care, by every means, to recall to their minds the thought of death: one by looking at the bones of the dead, another by beholding the grave, another by lying in his coffin.

But thou, O priest, requirest no extraordinary sign, that the thought of death should often come into thy mind.

For hardly a day passes but some special admonition of death is accorded to thee.

At one time thou art called to minister to one about to die: at another to assist one in their agony: at another to bury the dead.

If the bell rings, it announces a funeral: if you go into the church, you tread on graves and tombs.

In one word, death presents himself to thee everywhere. So I have determined, and wherefore?

Because, since by the greatness of thy position thou art exposed to danger, it is necessary that thou shouldst think more frequently of thy last things, I willed that there should be in thy sacred ministry

almost continual incitement to the wholesome thought and recollection of death.

7. Shut not, then, the eyes of thy mind, nor turn away, when this sad but necessary image of death presents itself to thee.

Harden not thy heart at his voice, but rather listen attentively. Receive and hide in thy bosom his words, that thy flesh may tremble for fear of him.

Are not those priests, My son, fools and unwise, who, ever walking among the dead, hardly think of death, and by custom almost become insensible to his threats?

They accompany death everywhere, and live as though they would never die: they possess the perishing things of this world as though they would last for ever: and even now sick and likely to die, they will hardly believe a brother who says to them, Put thy house in order, for thou shalt die.

O, My son! such as their life is, such is their death: their life is according to the flesh, and their death almost always, as far as concerns want of preparation, sudden.

Far be from thee, My son, their forgetfulness of their end, and its baleful fruits! Die daily in thought, as Paul did, and thou shalt rejoice with him when thou shalt be freed from the body of this death.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE LAST JUDGMENT.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. After death, My son, thou shalt sleep in the dust of the earth; but thou shalt awake, thou shalt rise, thou shalt come into the valley of Jehoshaphat, when I shall sit there to judge all nations.

There thou shalt see Me in thy flesh, and I will search out thy reins and thine heart.

I will bring to light the hidden things of darkness. I will make manifest the counsels of thy heart: thou shalt be weighed in the ba-

lance, and I will render unto thee according to thy works.

2. That will be the end of all things, My son, the reward of all righteousness, the vengeance on every sin.

Understand what I say, and provide for thyself wisely, that in that day of wrath thou be safe and blessed.

3. I have often said to thee, My son, despise the things of this earth, for the world passeth away and the lust thereof.

Love not the world, neither the things of the world, for the fashion of the world passeth away.

Dost thou wish to keep the Commandments I have so often repeated to thee? Dost thou wish to overcome that most wicked nature of thine, that ever strongly allures thee to sensible objects?

Bear often in mind that last hour when the elements of the whole world shall melt with fervent heat.

4. Picture to thyself often in thine inmost mind that thou seest the dreadful signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: great earthquakes on the earth, which thou inhabitest: that thou hearest the roaring of the sea, and the sound of the last trumpet.

Then, truly, thy old man, withering in expectation of the judgment that is about to come upon thee, will not dare so strongly to lust against the spirit.

Truly, thou wilt not say, it is good for us to be in this world: let us make here our pleasant abiding place, when thou recollectest that this world is no abiding city.

Truly, thou wilt not consider the kingdoms of the earth and their glory to be true goods, when thou thinkest that they are going to destruction.

Truly, thou wilt not be conquered by ambition, when thou thinkest of that day when every man shall be abased.

Truly, thou wilt not desire to lay up treasure upon earth, when thou thinkest that all riches fly away in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.

Truly, thou wilt not pamper the flesh, when thou reflectest that that flesh, once actually pampered, will be thy worst enemy in the day of doom.

Remember the end, My son, and thou wilt say, Verily, LORD, I have known

that all is vanity save to love Thee, to serve Thee, and to sanctify myself and others.

Happy is he only whom Thou shalt find in that hour so doing.

5. Picture often to thy mind, My son, that thou seest at thy side priests rising from the tombs, some in joy, glory, subtilty, clarity, agility, and incorruption, because they are holy; some in squalor, opprobrium, grief, fury, gnashing of teeth, because they were perverse.

Be alarmed by these, be incited to virtue by those, and moved by such a sight, say to thyself, O my soul, see how good it is for a priest to have borne the yoke.

See how good it is for a presbyter to have acted and taught rightly. See what glory awaits those whose life was counted as folly by the wicked.

See how they are counted among the sons of God, and their lot is with the Saints.

O blessed presbyters, crowned with a double honour: let us run, O my soul, after these as the hart to the water-brooks.

Let us run after them in patience, in tribulation, in necessities, in stripes, in prisons, in travails, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, in chastity, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in meekness, in the Holy Spirit, in charity unfeigned.

Let us run after them in honour and dishonour, in good report and bad report.

O my soul, we hold the word of truth which they held; we possess the armour of righteousness with which they fought on the right hand and on the left. Let us fight, let us run the course, O my soul.

If the soul refuseth, if it reject the holy toil, go on and say, Behold, O my soul, whither leadeth the sloth and frowardness of the wicked priest.

Behold how horrible it is to arise after a sinful life, and then to fall into the hands of the living God.

Behold how the sins of priests hang close to him, how he beareth his own sins and those of others.

In life, he was the ram at the head of the flock; in the resurrection, he shall be the he-goat in front of the damned.

O my soul, let us turn away from sin: let us search the commandments of our

LORD: let us do His Will with a strong and willing heart.

Let us avoid the snare of the devil and all hurtful desires, which shall plunge us with them into destruction.

6. Picture, also, often in thy mind, My son, that thou seest My sign appearing in the heaven, even My Cross, shining aloft, and say, Behold the balance in which I shall be weighed. O happy me, if I shall be found nailed to it with my CHRIST.

Happy me, if I shall have carried the Cross after JESUS!

Happy me, if by it, I shall have been made conformed to the Image of the SON of GOD! Then, verily, I shall approach to CHRIST the Judge with great confidence.

But wretched me, if I shall have crucified JESUS afresh by my sins.

Wretched me, if I shall have accounted the Blood shed for me on the Cross an unholy thing!

Wretched me, if by my carnal life I shall have been an enemy of the Cross.

O my soul, let us deny ourselves, let us take up our cross and follow JESUS: let us now suffer with Him, that in the Resurrection we may be glorified with Him.

7. Picture often in thy mind, My son, that thou seest Me, the Son of man, coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great majesty.

And observe priests standing before Me, some on the right hand upon thrones, judging the life of My people; others on the left, with the Devil and his angels.

Behold the books opened that the dead may be judged from the things that are therein written.

Hear how nothing is closed that shall not be revealed, nothing hidden that shall not be known.

Hear the most sweet words of the Judge to the holy priests—O blessed of My FATHER, who have done all things that I commanded you.

Faithful servants, who have borne the heat and burthen of the day: who have fed, given to drink, comforted, clothed, set free Me in My members, even My least ones, whether hungry, thirsty, sick, naked, or in prison, by so many labours, sweatings, words, ex-

amples, prayers, and sacraments.

Come, My beloved children, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Wilt thou not say here, My son, Farewell earth, farewell all things of the world; God forbid that I should any longer entangle myself in secular employments. I will fight in the cause of God alone by true piety and faithful service.

Well done, O my soul. If the labour affright thee, much more does the reward induce thee.

8. But hear further, My son, what shall be said to froward priests.

O cursed sons of perdition, who had the name that ye lived and yet were dead, blush now and be confounded.

Hear your shame proclaimed before your face. Let the people whom I committed to you know, let all My whole house know how full ye were of guile and falsehood.

Let it know your sacrileges, your sins: let it know that vengeance is Mine, and I will repay.

Go, most lost ones, and of all accursed men, the most accursed, go, depart from Me into everlasting fire.

O, My son! Certainly, to many priests this terrible sentence will be addressed. Shalt thou be of their number?

Fear, My son, fear: the righteous scarcely shall be saved on that day.

Fear; and if thy heart accuse thee of anything, at once and without delay come into My presence with confession, with penitence, with every good work.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF HELL.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Thou knowest, My son, that sinners shall go into eternal fire, that they may be burnt and suffer for ever with the Devil and his angels.

Thou knowest, thou be-

lievest this: thou declarest to My sheep, at My command, this terrible verity. But thou knowest, also, that this place of torment was made, not only for punishing the wicked flock, but for froward priests—for wicked shepherds was it chiefly ordained.

Truly for Lucifer and his companions was it created; and it was ordained that these, the more powerful, should suffer their torments proportionably.

O, thou new Lucifer, who by the exaltedness of thy state, art heavenly, and of the heavens, fear, lest with the first Lucifer thou fall and be cast with him at length into the fiery lake.

O, thou who art rich in the treasures of heaven, fear, lest abusing these, thou be burned with the rich man in hell.

O, thou to whom are committed the very precious talents of My priesthood, fear, lest with the unprofitable servant thou be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

2. Where, My son, where is Judas? where are the other priests who have imitated him, and are, like him, dead in their sins?

Where? They are burned in hell; they lie the deeper therein, as they should have been higher exalted in heaven.

There they are, filled with as much greater confusion, as they were adorned with greater honour on earth.

There they are, as much despised, mocked, tormented by Satan, as they were honoured by men and angels on earth.

There they drink as much of the gall of dragons, and the poison of asps, as they unworthily partook of My Blood at the altar.

There they shall be as much stung and tormented by the old Serpent, as they should have been hurtful and offensive to him by their sacred duties.

There they shall be the poorer and the more naked, as they stripped My sheep, without labour, of what they wanted, and more.

There they shall be the more burned, as they were freed from ordinary cares by the holiness of their condition, and led a more tranquil life in the world.

There they shall be stung with sharper goadings, as they, by sloth and carelessness, allowed more sheep to perish.

There they shall be the more excruciated with hunger and thirst, as they led an easy life on earth.

There they shall be overwhelmed with more stinking pitch and sulphur, as they lived in the flesh in the most spiritual and holy condition.

There shall they howl as furious dogs, in proportion as they were silent in the seat of the gospel.

There their ears shall be saluted with horrid tumults and cries, in proportion as they neglected to listen to the sorrows of penitents.

There their eyes shall behold more horrible monsters, inasmuch as they neglected to keep them open upon My flock, or watch the face of their sheep.

There shall their weeping be more abundant, in the inverse proportion of those whom they moved to the tears of conversion.

There their desolation shall be greater, as they neglected to console My desolate sheep on earth.

There their torture shall be more savage, the less they compassionated and comforted their suffering flock.

There their flesh shall be the more lacerated, the more souls they slew by their offences.

There their groans shall be the less listened to, in proportion as they neglected to be constant in prayer upon earth, in proportion as they did My work negligently.

There, in fine, they shall sustain the scourges of My justice the more rigorously, as they neglected to teach the people, to keep My commandments, and thus, more than others, resisted the Holy Spirit.

3. It is so, My son: they were My men, My friends, My ministers, nourished and waxen fat on My goods, and they kicked against Me, and betrayed Me, and did despite to My Spirit, and trod Me under foot.

I am more outraged of them than other sinners, and I will avenge Me more: the dregs of the cup of My wrath shall not be exhausted upon them.

All the storms and waves of My fury shall pass over them, yea, for ever and ever.

4. O, My son, fear Me, who can destroy both body and soul in hell.

Behold, before thee is life and death: heaven and hell —choose.

Son, canst thou dwell in devouring fire, who canst not endure the bite of a

worm, a spark of flame, a prick of a needle?

Thou shalt dwell there if thou wishest to pass thy days in good things, for this is the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

Thou shalt dwell there if thou art unwilling to do violence to nature, for it is only the violent shall take the kingdom of heaven by force, and avoid hell.

Thou shalt dwell there if thou remainest slothful, for without labour no reward is given save outer darkness.

Thou shalt dwell there if thou be not holy, for the holy only shall go into everlasting life, and shall be preserved from the eternal fire.

5. My son, take heed to thyself, attend to thyself: what dost thou deserve? for I, the Son of God, come in an hour thou knowest not of.

If I should come to-morrow, if thou wast to die to-morrow, where wouldst thou go? let thine heart consider.

If to-day thou act worthy of hell fire, how shalt thou to-morrow be worthy of heaven?

Son, to-morrow is an uncertain day, and how knowest thou that thou shalt have a to-morrow?

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE GROAN OF A PRIEST IN HELL.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Hear, My son, thy lost brother-priest; I do not say have pity on him, for thy compassion cannot profit him, for in hell is no redemption.

Listen: "I am tormented in this flame." What is this, My son? Wherefore says he not, by this flame?

Truly because, besides the violence of the fire, he endures another torture of pain therein.

And, indeed, incline thine ear, and hear him.

"Wretched me! I am wearied in the way of iniquity and perdition.

"Wretched me! I have walked in difficult paths, but I have not followed the

path of the LORD, which I pointed out to others.

"Wretched me! what profit is there in pride? and the boastfulness of riches, what has it done for me?

"Fool that I was! the false goods that I loved have passed away like a shadow. Most unhappy that I am! I shall never behold the face of My most good FATHER which is in heaven.

"That was my rest, and I never shall attain to it. I thirst, and shall never drink. I hunger, and shall never eat.

"Nothing remaineth to me for ever, but grief, and wailing, and pain.

"Loose me! loose me! my perdition is my own work, the fruit of mine iniquities.

"O, my soul! what has possessed thee, not to obey the commandments of my GOD, which I taught unto others; not to respond to the grace that unceasingly urged me.

"Behold, how often I have absolved others, and my sins are retained for ever.

"Often, in my duty, have I terrified GOD's people by the pains of hell, as my duty required me: and now I have brought down, by my carelessness and crimes, these pains upon my head.

"O, if I had had a right judgment! O, if I had understood! O, if I had considered the latter end! Loose me! loose me!

"Thou art righteous, O LORD, and righteous is Thy judgment. There is nothing that Thou oughtest to have done for my salvation, that Thou didst not do. My perdition is my own doing."

2. Attend, My son, and hear further.

"Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue.

"O apostle, O holy priest, whose successor I was, send some of my sheep, who by my ministrations have attained unto your society, that they may aid me."

What answer shall be given? Listen.

"Remember that thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst good things, and they crosses and evil things; but now they are comforted, and thou art tormented, and between you and us there is a great gulf fixed.

"O, sorrow! O, heap of sorrow! no hope of aid, no expectation of comfort, no place for repentance, no

prospect of redemption, is afforded. There remaineth only the terrible burden of a most wretched eternity.

"O, cruel worm! behold, those I saved shall be for ever happy. I have perished by my own fault, and shall be tormented for ever."

3. Attend, My son, and hear yet further.

"Father Abraham, holy inhabitants of the glorious kingdom, saintly priests, I beseech you send some one to my brethren, the Presbyters on earth, who are still alive, that they may bear witness to them, that they come not into this place of torment. If any one were to go from the dead to them, they would repent."

What shall be answered? Hear.

"If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither would they believe though one rose from the dead."

O, My son, behold thou hast heard a terrible mystery. Such is the frowardness of a wicked priest, that not even by the resurrection of the dead can he be brought to penitence and conversion.

And, in fact, My son, did not the Chief Priests and Scribes see Lazarus raised from the dead by Me? They did so.

Yet neither did they believe My words or works, nor did they believe Me, at the sight of that dead man who was raised: but became, on the other hand, more hostile to Me.

The wicked priest knoweth the faith, yet resists it when it threatens him: he is heaped upon with graces, yet refuses to co-operate with the grace which draws him.

He is blinded, hardened, and dies in that blindness and hardness, and at length he goeth to the place of torment.

Fear, therefore, My son, again I say, fear, lest thou become like unto him.

To-day if thou wilt hear the voice of the LORD, harden not thy heart, but see if there be any way of wickedness in thee, and if so, remove it far from thee.

Arise, and enter on the narrow way, that leadeth to eternal life.

CHAPTER XV.

OF THE GLORY OF HEAVEN.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, I ascended into heaven, and sit for ever at the right hand of My FATHER.

My son, do thou ascend also: take to thee wings as of a dove and fly.

In My FATHER'S House are many mansions: there is one appointed for thee: I have gone before thee, to prepare that place for thee.

This shall be thy rest for ever: choose it, that in the end thou mayst dwell there for ever.

Come, My beloved, come into My garden. I will be thine exceeding great reward.

2. O, My son, hadst thou the eyes of thine heart enlightened: didst thou know what is the hope of thy calling, and what the riches of the glory of Mine inheritance among the Saints:

Didst thou know the heaven to which I call thee, unto which I compel thee to come, thou wouldest certainly prevent Me, and wouldest, from this moment to the very last breath of thy life, exclaim, and with the most vehement desire:

O good FATHER, Thy kingdom come! O LORD, give me that water, that I may never thirst more!

LORD, open to me the gates of Thy kingdom: my heart desireth and fainteth for Thy courts!

3. Thou knowest, My son, how sweet it is for one wearied with daily toil to repose.

Thou knowest how pleasant it is for one who is sick to be freed from acute pangs.

However grateful and pleasant this repose seem to thee, it is not a figure of the repose I have prepared for My soldiers.

The rest of this world is short-lived, and hardly sufficeth to the reparation of the wasted strength for fresh labours.

Mine is eternal, and undisturbed by aught.

The rest of this world is imperfect, and frees not from human sorrow.

Mine is absolute, and makes My saints safe from

every pain, sorrow, crying, and vexation.

The rest of this world is a light comfort to wayfaring men.

Mine is the eternal ease of an exulting soul: it is the endless delight in Me, the Supreme Good.

O, My son, when will the happy hour come, when thou shalt enter into this holy rest, and shalt be really and truly free from all need, and fear, and punishment.

Then no more shalt thou have a struggle between the flesh and the spirit, against the powers of darkness: no more shalt thou go through many tribulations.

No more shalt thou fear sin, and siftings, and straits, and hunger, and persecution, and the sword.

No more shalt thou have the care of the Churches: no longer shalt thou cry, Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? Then shalt thou see that the former things have passed away.

Is not this rest worth thy labours, O My son! Take up, then, in the hope of this rest, My yoke upon thee, and it will seem to thee easy and light.

4. Dost thou know, My son, what it is to be satiated as to thy most ardent desires?

Thou knowest not, My son, for this satisfaction cannot be given on earth; and the heart of man, when his first desires are extinct, is ever excruciated with new ones.

But thou knowest what it is to be filled when hungry: what it is to be given to drink when thirsty: what it is for a covetous man to be enriched: what it is for a proud man to be exalted: what it is to a sensual man to be gladdened: this, among foolish men, is termed joy.

Yet, were any one to enjoy to the full all desires most abundantly, would his happiness shadow forth the bliss of the saints?

No, My son, certainly not. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what I have prepared for them that love Me.

There, the thirsty soul shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of My house: there, she shall be given to drink of the torrents of My pleasures:

There, she shall eat of the sweet tree of life: there, she shall hear the voice of

the harpers harping, and the new song before the Throne of GOD:

There, the just shall shine as the sun: there, they shall exult like conquerors over the prey, when they divide the spoil:

There, I will show not through a glass darkly, but face to face, Myself the universal good.

O, My son, if thou wouldst recognise these things which are now hid from thine eyes, that which shall be revealed to thee when thou shalt see light in My light: if thou didst but know . . . .

I have yet many things to say unto thee, but thou canst not bear them now, for thou art yet without understanding.

Let that which thou believest be sufficient for thee: it is enough for thee to know that eternal life is prepared for thee; that in eternal life man becomes truly happy: and that in that life holy priests are above all others most gloriously crowned.

5. Rejoice, My son, rejoice, for it has pleased Me to give thee this kingdom.

Rejoice, if thou art poor in spirit: blessed art thou, for thine is the kingdom of heaven.

Rejoice, if thou art meek: blessed art thou, for thou shalt inherit the land of the living.

Rejoice, if thou mournest thy sins and those of thy brethren: blessed art thou, for thou shalt be comforted for ever.

Rejoice, if, by thy zeal, thou hungerest and thirstest after righteousness: blessed art thou, for thou shalt be filled.

Rejoice, if thou diligently administerest the mysteries of My mercy to the penitent: blessed art thou, for thou shalt obtain mercy.

Rejoice, if thou receivest Me with a pure heart, and with a right heart seekest nothing but My glory: blessed art thou, for thou shalt see Me.

Rejoice, if thou strivest to confirm the peace of love among My sheep: blessed art thou, for thou shalt rejoice among My sons in heaven.

Rejoice, if thou suffer persecution for the faith or for zeal: blessed art thou, for thine is the kingdom.

Rejoice, if men shall revile you, and say all manner of things falsely against you for My sake: blessed art thou: be exceeding glad, My son, for great is thy reward in heaven.

Well done, good servant; convert sinners, labour faithfully in My vineyard, and I, the LORD of the vineyard and the Prince of the shepherds, will come to meet thee, and place upon thy head an incorruptible crown of glory.

6. O, My son, often think of that most joyous hour, in which the gate of heaven shall be opened unto thee.

Await it, salute it, desire it: cry out for desire, Woe is me, that I am constrained to dwell with Mesech.

Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, on account of this most precious reward.

Truly, much more wilt thou rejoice when thou shalt come and be crowned, than he who from the most squalid prison is brought out to possess a kingdom.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF A DEVOUT CONTEMPLATION OF THE DIVINE MAJESTY.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. O GOD invisible! O Being infinitely perfect! O incomprehensible Trinity! Grant that I, which am but dust and ashes, may render, in a soul profoundly humbled, due worship unto Thee.

Grant unto me, which am set apart to serve Thee in the Ministry of Thine Anointed, and in the stewardship of His mysteries, to meditate a little while before the exceeding greatness of Thy Majesty.

2. I believe and confess, O LORD, that Thou and Thou only art eternal, which wast, and art, and art to come for ever.

Thou art He that madest the heavens, the earth, and all that in them is: Who hast created all things, Thyself being made of none.

Thou art He Who, when Thou hast in Thine infinite wisdom fashioned and set in order this visible world, yet art able to make a thousand other works still more fair and more wonderful.

Thou art He Who, when in Thine Almighty power Thou hast said, Let them be made, and at once all things

were made, canst, with the same ease, yet further create a multitude of worlds, both greater and better.

Thou art He Who upholdest the stars, givest light to the sun, orderest the course of the moon, bearest the earth with Thy finger, controllest the waves of the sea, and to all things that exist givest their origin and increase.

3. Thou art He Who hast the power of life and of death, for Thy pleasure giveth life or death to all things: Who bringest the winds out of Thy treasures, Who thunderest with Thy thunder.

Who pourest out Thy showers, Who scatterest the dew, Who spreadest abroad the snow, Who by the frost driest up and makest hard, Who by heat nourishest and makest fruitful.

Thou art He Whose Name is the LORD of Hosts, making war and creating peace, according to Thy good pleasure.

Thou art the King of kings and LORD of lords, in Whose hands are the lots of all: in Whose will all things are placed, and Whom to resist no man is able.

4. Thou art He Who specially settest Thy seat in the heavens, sitting on a throne of fire, surrounded with the unspeakable splendour which Thou sendest forth, attended by an innumerable army of Cherubim and Seraphim and other spirits that continually do cry:

Holy, holy, holy, LORD GOD of Sabaoth: heaven and earth are full of the Majesty of Thy glory.

Thou art He that shall come to judge the quick and the dead with infinite righteousness, with an incomparable Majesty.

Thou art He that shalt bless Thy faithful servants on high for ever: and Thine enemies, set as Thy footstool, shalt punish terribly for ever.

5. O the depth! O the height of GOD! I believe and confess: Thou art infinite and without end: nor is there any place so secret, so hidden, and so dark, which Thou canst not occupy with Thy presence.

In Thee all things live, and move, and have their being: Thou beholdest all things, Thou possessest all knowledge: all things are naked and open in Thy sight.

Thy Providence sweetly disposeth all things, ordering the mean creepings of

the worm as well as the vital motions of a more noble animal: settling the state of a single grain of sand even as of the whole world.

Thy supreme justice beareth neither the slightest fault without punishment, nor the very least good work without reward.

Thy Mercy, of which there is no end, wisheth nothing for us but good, salvation and felicity, not desiring that any should perish, but that all should turn and repent.

Him, therefore, who hath gone astray it patiently longeth for, anxiously seeketh: when found, it lovingly embraceth, most affectionately sparing him who sorroweth for his sins.

Thy Nature is that infinite goodness which upon earth heapeth up so many good things and so many graces upon the sons of men, and in the heavens prepareth for them eternal happiness and glory.

6. O, Thou Being most perfect! Behold, most humbly prostrate, I confess, from my very heart, that I cannot sufficiently praise, bless, glorify, and adore Thee.

But, as far as in me lieth, I praise, magnify, and bless Thee.

O, Thou Almighty and exalted Being! I confess I am entirely in Thy hands: and in this I rejoice, beseeching Thee that Thou wouldest do with me according to Thy good pleasure.

O, Thou chief Good! I know and confess that I cannot render unto Thee thanks befitting Thy immense goodness, nor, as is due, can I love in return One that so loveth me.

Grant me, I beseech Thee, that at least I may love Thee, my GOD, with my whole heart, with my whole mind, and with my whole strength.

7. O, supreme Justice! I confess, with trembling, that Thou judgest righteousness itself.

Forgive me, I pray, my trespasses, before I depart out of this world, so that when Thou judgest I may not be confounded. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O LORD, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified.

O the immensity of GOD! I confess that, since Thou fillest all, there is no place where I can safely sin out of Thy sight.

O, Thou chief Providence, who beholdest all things as a Father! all my anxiety I trustingly cast into Thy bosom, committing myself entirely to Thee.

O, Thou infinite Mercy! I confess that Thou never sendest away any who return unto Thee: wherefore, sorrowing that I have so often and so enormously offended Thee, I firmly hope to obtain from Thee pardon, grace, and glory.

8. How right, how just is it, O Thou great GOD, O Thou LORD of all! that I should serve and love Thee.

How honourable is it to me that me, so vile and abject a creature, Thou deignest to allow Thy service and Thy love; yea, and even commandest them! O how ungrateful should I be, if I refuse Thee these.

O, our FATHER! O, best of fathers! O that all Thy creatures, O that all Thy children, united and adoring in a confession of Thy greatness, would pay and unceasingly return unto Thee the fit praises of honour, and blessing, and adoration, from their innermost hearts.

O, Thou LORD of all! Reign over the whole world which Thou hast made: in it let nothing but Thy Will be done.

May this most holy Will, I beseech Thee, be the one end—the sole rule of our thoughts, desires, and actions!

CHAPTER XVII.

OF THE CONFESSION OF THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. At Thy Name, O LORD JESUS, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess that Thou art the LORD, to the glory of GOD the FATHER.

For Thou art the Word, Which was in the beginning with GOD, and Which was GOD, and by Whom all things were made.

Thou art He Whom the FATHER from the beginning had foretold to the world through the mouth of the prophets, and had promised should be sent; not, indeed, as man alone, but as the mighty GOD, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Thou art He Who, for so many ages, wast the expectation of the people of Israel, and of all nations.

Thou art He Whose day Abraham rejoiced to see: from Whom all our fathers drank the spiritual drink, being sanctified through faith in Thy coming.

2. Thou art He Who, by being born of a virgin, showedst Thyself to wondering nature to be the Creator and not a creature.

Thou art He Who at Thy rising, being praised with the song of angels, didst manifest Thyself to be the King of Heaven.

Thou art He Who, by enlightening the Magi with a new star, didst show Thyself to be the maker of the stars.

Thou art He to Whom John, who was more than a prophet, did bear witness, saying, Behold the Lamb of GOD that taketh away the sins of the world.

3. Thou art He of Whom the FATHER, by a heavenly voice out of the cloud declared, as it were by thunder, This is My beloved SON in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him.

Thou art He to Whom Satan himself and his angels bare witness, saying, What hast Thou to do with us, JESUS, Thou SON of GOD? art Thou come to torment us before the time?

Thou art He Who, when Thou didst bear record of Thyself, saying, I came out from the FATHER the LORD of heaven and earth—I and the FATHER are one—didst also testify of Thy Divinity and perfect equality with the FATHER by every kind of sign and wonder, giving sight to the blind, making the lame to walk, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead:

Multiplying the loaves: commanding the winds and the sea, and they obeyed: foretelling things to come:

At Thy death darkening the sun and the moon, contrary to the order of nature: making the earth to quake: rending the rocks: when dead opening the graves: and by these wonders inwardly moving the centurion, and those that

were with him watching Thee, and compelling them to confess, Truly this was the SON of GOD:

And at last, which is of all the greatest act of Thy Divinity, raising Thyself from the dead.

4. Even to this day these proclaim Thy Divinity—the dispersion and the humiliation, and the hardening of the hearts of the Jewish people, whose fathers denied Thee and crucified Thee, bearing about throughout all nations the signs of Divine vengeance and reprobation.

The still existing ruins of the temple and city of Jerusalem, whose destruction Thou hadst foretold, proclaim it.

Those holy places, where Thou didst perform so many miracles, and which are still reverenced by the faithful, proclaim it.

5. Verily, O LORD JESU, Thou art the CHRIST, SON of the living GOD, Who art come into the world.

Our fathers, the Apostles, conversed with Thee on the earth: and they suffered martyrdom, in testimony of Thy Divinity.

The whole world, at the preaching of the Apostles, believed Thee to be GOD, because it saw that their testimony was true.

6. For the sake of that truth, an innumerable host of men hesitated not, yea, were most eager, to shed their blood, and lay down their lives.

For its sake kings and princes willingly submitted to the yoke of the new covenant.

For its sake philosophers and wise men embraced and followed Thee, JESU, as their Master.

For its sake the Gentiles, leaving their errors, breaking their idols, overturning their temples, casting aside their vices, received the Cross and the gospel.

For its sake, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, from the north and from the sea, from the time of Thy death, O LORD, even until now, men of every age and condition serve Thee, O CHRIST JESU, with adoration, with praise, with sacrifice, with penitence, and with the observance of all righteousness.

In a word, for the sake of this truth, Thy Church, as Thou hast foretold, fighteth for Thee, and will fight for Thee, even unto the world's end, never to be

prevailed against by the gates of hell; and even though violently assaulted, yet hath she continued uninjured up to this present day.

7. O LORD JESU, reasonable, indeed, is my service, when I praise Thee, my GOD: when I acknowledge Thee to be my LORD most highest.

Assuredly it is very meet and right that, together with Nature itself, with the stars, with the angels that bear Thee witness, with so many that were healed by Thee when Thou wast upon the earth, with Thine Apostles, with so many martyrs, so many kings, so many wise, with all the upright in heart, I should cry, saying,

O Holy GOD, Holy and Mighty: Holy and Everlasting is our SAVIOUR JESUS:

Heaven and earth are full of His glory: glory be to Him, most high.

Blessed be JESUS, the SON of the Eternal FATHER, Who came unto us in His Name, GOD of GOD, Light of Light: glory be to Him, most high.

8. LORD! Behold I am set by Thee on Thy holy mountain, to preach the faith in JESUS my GOD, and to gather unto Him servants and worshippers in the truth. Grant, O LORD, grant that in this work, by word, example, and by prayer, I may spend and be spent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF VERY RELIGIOUS DEVOTION TO THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Voice of the Eternal Father.

1. Who art thou, My son? None other than the minister of My CHRIST, and the steward of His mysteries.

O, with what love shouldst thou love Him in return, Who hath given thee such love.

O, with what care shouldst thou attend to the words and commandments of thy King, to fulfil them, and provide that others should do so.

O, with what zeal shouldst thou labour to please Him in all things.

2. O, man of Mine Anointed, put away all things, and bear about with thee and retain in thy mind, in thy heart, in thy work, JESUS only.

I gave thee a mind to direct thee in every word and act, and to what should thy mind direct thy words and actions, save to the worship of JESUS and His service?

And who is he who can enlighten thy mind for this? save He Who is My Very Wisdom, Very Light, My most Beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased.

O, My son, consult Him, attend to Him, that is, search out diligently His sacred doctrine, that it may be a light unto thy feet and a lantern to thy paths.

So far, preaching the gospel in His Name, thou declarest not thine own but His glad tidings. So far, it is He, and not thou, that speaketh by thy mouth.

O, if by reading and meditation on His Words, thou draw out thy heart, and really know JESUS CHRIST, how sufficiently wouldst thou be instructed for thyself and for others.

His doctrine exceeds the doctrine of all souls. This is the knowledge which the lips of the priest shall keep.

3. My son, I gave thee a heart to love, and whom oughtest thou to love with all thy heart, save Him Who hath done so much for thee, in taking thee into His service?

And to whom shouldst thou be more closely attached, than to My SON, the true Vine, of which thou art a branch?

And how shalt thou bring forth fruit, unless by love thou abide in that Vine?

And how shalt thou live, if thou love not Him, with whom thou art one Body, and member of His members?

O, happy member, love thy Head, and never be animated by any spirit but His.

Love thy Head, and never suffer thyself to be separated from Him, either by persecution, or by the sword, or by hunger, or by any power, or by any suffering.

Love thy Head, and as the member from the inclination of its nature faithfully serves the body in all things, so do thou serve JESU in everything, in every

feeling, by doing all things to His glory.

Love thy Head, and as the member giveth itself up and alloweth itself to be cut off for the health of the body, so do thou ever be ready to be sacrificed for JESUS.

Live a member, deriving life from that of thy Head: breathe of His Spirit: rejoice in His joy: grieve in His dolours.

Live by love in JESUS, and JESUS in thee: O, how thou shalt advance with Him: how thou shalt be sanctified with Him: how thou shalt sanctify others: how thou shalt magnify thine office.

4. Dost thou wish to please Me, My son, and become My beloved one: do according to the example which was showed thee on the Mount.

Imitate, in all thine actions, My most dearly beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased. Those have I predestinated, whom I foreknew should be conformed to His Image.

Therefore, let His life be ever before thine eyes, that thou mayst be drawn by the bonds of His love, and mayst run after the odour of His perfumes.

Behold the love wherewith He loved Me: He knew that the sacrifices of men pleased Me not, and descended into earth, in order by Himself to satisfy Me for the injuries I had sustained from man.

Behold His love towards mankind: He bore their sins upon the Tree.

Behold His humility: He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.

Behold His obedience: He was made obedient unto death, and ever did what was pleasing to Me.

Behold His pity: He went about doing good and healing all.

Behold His penitence: He fasted forty days and nights.

Behold His modesty: it was so great that His disciples marvelled that He talked with the Samaritan.

Behold His humanity: He wept at the tomb of Lazarus, and consoled the widow of Nain.

Behold His poverty: He had not where to lay His head.

Behold His zeal: how am I straitened until the work be done which I have undertaken for the glory of the FATHER, and for the salvation of man.

Behold His devotion: He spent the whole night in prayer to GOD.

Behold His fatherly care for us: not to let the multitude return fasting, He multiplied the loaves and fishes in the desert.

Behold His loveableness: it was such that all men desired to see Him; the crowd following Him trod upon each other. Zaccheus, from the crowd, got up into a tree to see Him.

Behold His gentleness: He absolved the adulteress; He kissed the traitor Judas; He prayed for His enemies.

Behold His rectitude of heart: I seek not Mine own glory, but that of the FATHER which sent Me.

Behold His stupendous generosity: Take eat, this is My Body; drink ye all of My Blood.

Behold His patience in adversity: FATHER, Thy will be done. Like the lamb before the shearers, He was dumb.

This is My beloved SON, in Whom I am well pleased. This is the Great High Priest, the model and rule of priests. Follow, My son, this Rule, and My peace shall ever be upon thee.

Be an imitator of My CHRIST, and I will be well pleased in thee.

Ever hold this Way: ever think on this Truth: ever live in this Life.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O JESU, good Shepherd, Who wert seen on earth, and didst dwell among men, grant that by ever studying Thy commandments, I may be filled with Thy most sacred doctrine.

Grant that, ever mindful of Thy blessings, I may more and more burn with Thy love. Grant that, continually meditating upon Thy perfection, I may day by day be more conformed to Thee.

O, my soul, praise JESUS everywhere: love JESUS everywhere: worship JESUS everywhere: offer thyself to JESUS everywhere: sigh without ceasing for JESUS, until thou dost expire in JESUS, and reignest for ever with Him. Amen.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF THE PERPETUAL MEMORY OF THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I, My son, the Author and Finisher of the Faith, endured the Cross, despising the shame, that thou mightest look on Me, and unceasingly draw to thyself from the Tree of Life whereon I hung, the sanctifying Spirit.

Verily, I say unto thee, if thou takest heed to exercise thyself diligently and devoutly on My Passion, there thou wilt find abundantly all things that be useful and necessary.

Open, therefore, thy heart to Me, and allow Me, the Crucified One, to enter there, and thou wilt soon wondrously be instructed.

Fix the eyes of thine heart on My Cross, and shortly thou shalt be drawn.

The Voice of the Disciple.

2. Rabboni! Best of Masters, speak, for Thy servant heareth.

Come to Thy poor servant, and kindle his heart: lighten his eyes, and make him that he may see.

The Voice of the Beloved.

3. My son, behold I come, incline thine ear and hear. O man of good will, I loved thee and gave Myself for thee.

O, if thou understoodest this word, thou wouldest quickly answer, LORD, Thou knowest that I love Thee.

Understand then, My son: I loved thee and gave Myself for thee: I, the Creator, for thee, the creature: I, the FATHER, for thee, the prodigal son: I, GOD, for thee, poor and frail man.

I, the offended, for thee, the offender: I, the benefactor, for thee, the ingrate; I, the essentially blessed, for thee, the most miserable.

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. LORD, wherefore didst Thou so for me? I know that Thy FATHER ever heareth Thee. If Thou hadst said the word, He would straightway have healed my soul, and forgiven the iniquity of my sin.

Wherefore, then, hast Thou won me back with so many labours? Why redeemed me by such a death?

The Voice of the Beloved.

5. My son, by this I am glorified, and by this the FATHER is glorified in Me.

Behold, and recognise what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, of My overflowing love towards thee.

I was able with a word, I was able with My tongue, to set thee free; yet I willed by work, by My manifested will, to save thee.

I willed to lay down My life for thee, that thou mightest know that there was nothing greater than My love for thee.

I willed to bedew thee with My Blood on the Cross, that thou touched by My goodness, mightest blush not to love such a Redeemer.

I willed to stand before thee wounded for thine iniquities, that thou mightest know how great sorrow thy sins produced in My inmost heart.

I willed to bear in My Body the wounds of thy sin, that thou moved with compassion, mightst refrain from adding sin to sin and wound to wound.

I willed, in short, O priest, so to suffer for thee, that I might leave thee an example, that thou shouldst follow My Steps.

6. My FATHER, O My son, predestined those whom He foreknew would be conformed to the Image of His SON.

Look, therefore, on My Face, that thou mayst express its lineaments in thyself, and so be safe.

See Me in My agony praying more earnestly, and learn to be unwearied and constant in prayer.

See Me taking a most bitter cup from the Hand of the FATHER, and learn to bear patiently and with submission the toils, the contradictions, and all the hardships of the sacred ministry.

See Me left by My slumbering disciples in profound grief, and learn to be constant, even without consolation in thine adversities.

See Me betrayed by Judas, and learn to bear with false brethren.

See Me embracing Judas, and learn not to deny the kiss of peace to thine enemies.

See Me led bound into

Jerusalem, and learn to bear bonds and reproaches for My sake.

See Me not resisting when unjustly bound and led along, but yielding like a gentle lamb that openeth not his mouth, and learn to abstain from variance and strife.

7. Come along with Me, My son, into Jerusalem: follow Me: there also I will teach thee.

Behold the High Priests, Annas and Caiaphas, demand My death: do thou fear, lest being a priest, by thy sins thou offend Me, and injure My glory more than others.

Behold I stand steadfastly before My persecutors: do thou fear not those who can kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do.

Behold Me patient under the buffeting of the servant of the High Priest: do thou patiently give the cheek to the smiter, and take heed lest thy household be the sons of wickedness, injuring Me by their offences.

Behold Me silent in the presence of false witnesses: do thou beware lest thou be angry with those who injure, abuse, deride, or slander thee.

Behold after so much Passion I sleep not, but remain awake the whole night among those who mocked and smote Me: do thou, in giving rest to thy body, be sober.

Behold Peter, at other times the most noble and firm, denied Me thrice in the hall of the High Priest: do thou, My son, the greater and firmer thou art, take heed lest on occasion thou fall.

Behold, without delay, in mercy I look upon the penitent Peter: do thou be gracious and kind to those who have erred and have returned.

Behold the coward Pilate dared not set Me free; though innocent, he gave Me up for fear: do thou shun being made judge, unless by the power thou canst break down sin.

Do not respect the person of the great, and take heed lest for fear, or from culpable indulgence, thou give that which is holy to the dogs.

Behold, clad in a white robe, I am sent away to Herod as insane: do thou not fear, My son, to be considered a fool for My sake.

Behold, Barabbas was preferred to Me: do thou

love, My son, to be unknown, and to be reputed as nothing: suffer thyself to be trodden under foot of men.

Behold, for thee I was most cruelly cut with scourges: do thou, My son, mortify thy members which are upon the earth, that thy spirit may be safe.

Behold, I was ignominiously and cruelly crowned with thorns—Behold the Man: having no form or beauty: do thou not adorn thy person with vain ornament.

Behold I, scarce breathing for wounds and stripes, refuse not for thee to carry the Cross: do thou lovingly take upon thee My Yoke, which is light and gentle.

8. Come further, My son, and climb with Me Mount Calvary: attend again, and be instructed.

What does the Way, wet with My Sweat and Blood, tell thee; but that thou, in seeking and winning souls, must with sweat and fatigue run by the highways and hedges?

What the mourning women, save that thou shouldst devote thyself to meditation on My Passion, compassionate My Dolours, and above all, bury thy sins, the cause of them?

What the stripping of My garments, save that thou shouldst bear poverty with equal mind.

What the stretching and nailing of Me to the Cross, save that thou must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts?

What the elevation of My Cross, save that it is necessary for thee to be raised to the kingdom of heaven by much tribulation?

What My bitter draught of gall and vinegar, save that thou must live soberly, and not desire to fare sumptuously?

What the thief saved at My right hand, but that thou oughtest never to despair of My mercy?

What the sinner perishing by the side of My goodness, but that thou must not presume on My clemency?

What My prayer for those who crucified Me, but that we ought to entreat for the most wicked sinners, and freely pardon our most obnoxious enemies?

What My commendation of My Mother, but that thou shouldest venerate her duly?

What My death for thee,

save that thou shouldest lay down thy life for thy brethren?

What the sorrow of sun, and moon, and rocks, and earth, but that thou art harder than the rocks if thou wail not at My death?

What mean Mine enemies smiting their breasts, save that My Cross is the copious fountain of contrition and of grace?

What meaneth My side opened by the soldier's spear, save that thou shouldest enter therein by love, and dwell there?

What meaneth Nicodemus taking Me down from the Cross, wrapping Me in spices, and laying Me in a new sepulchre, save that thou shouldest carefully take heed to receive and minister My sacraments with great pureness of heart, and care for the glory of My House and Altar?

9. Think of these things, My son, dwell on them, and there shall be to thee in My Cross safety, life, protection from thy foes, and an inpouring of heavenly sweetness.

CHAPTER XX.

OF COMPUNCTION OF HEART AT THE FEET OF OUR CRUCIFIED LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. Speak thou unto my heart, thou Holy Cross: speak, O Cross, which deservest my love. Tell me of that exceeding love with which the good Master hath loved His disciple.

What compassion was it that induced Thee, O most merciful JESUS, to suffer so great indignities for my sake?

Behold, Thou that art the Author of Life, art led as a sheep to the slaughter, being made obedient even unto death.

Thou GOD, begotten of GOD, being clothed in my nature, didst go up to the wood of the Cross, and in the flesh which Thou hadst taken, didst suffer its cruel punishment.

2. O, sweet SON, Who for me wast barbarously stretched out! Contem-

plate those innocent Hands, which did flow with so much blood!

That unprotected Side, pierced with the cruel spear! Those sacred Feet, stabbed through with the terrible nails!

Those beautiful Eyes, which the darkness of death hath overshadowed! That royal Mouth, which paleness hath hidden!

Those Arms prostrated and dyed! Those Limbs most holy, flowing with blood!

O, innocent Lamb, stricken for the sins of the people! O, Thou, Who, when in Thee there was no guile, yet wast numbered with the transgressors!

3. Alas! that I was not able to behold the LORD of angels humbled to be amongst men, that He might raise men to the company of angels!

Alas! that I could not look upon an offended GOD, dying that the sinner might live!

Alas! that I deserved not to be present, and to be astonished at so wonderful, at so precious an instance of love!

Thou wouldst have cried out, O my soul: assuredly thou wouldst have shed copious tears, for thou couldst not have borne such a sight.

4. And yet, although thou didst not see it, weep, lament, and wail, for that thou wast the cause of these sufferings.

For thou, O my soul, thou thyself wast the stripe which caused the pain of CHRIST: thou wast the deserving cause of His death, and the iniquity which brought vengeance on Him: thou wast the reason of the blackness of His Passion, and the agony of His suffering.

Thou didst commit iniquity, and in thy stead was the Just One punished: thou didst transgress, and in thy stead was the Innocent beaten.

What thou, the wicked one, didst deserve, that did He, the Righteous One, suffer: what thou, the servant, didst do amiss, for it did the Master make satisfaction: what thou, His creature, didst commit, that did He bear.

Thou wast proud, and He was humbled: thou wast puffed up, and He was brought low: thou wast disobedient, and He, who was obedient, paid the penalty for thy disobedience.

O, my soul! What re-

ward canst thou render unto thy GOD, for so great love, for such tenderness, for such wonderful loving-kindness? Assuredly in thine own heart thou wilt find nothing which can fitly be returned for such gifts. Assuredly thy utmost ingenuity can devise nothing worthy to be compared with this divine mercy.

There is, however, my soul, something in which thy low estate can declare and show forth thy gratitude to thy SAVIOUR.

If, namely, by sorrow of heart, thou detest thy cruelty: if thou weep bitterly, because by thy sins thou wast the cause of His sufferings: if, from henceforth, thou fly from sin as from the face of a serpent:

If, by suffering with Him, thou imitate the pains of the crucified One: if thou crucify thy flesh with the affections and lusts: if thou forget not these inestimable benefits of thy SAVIOUR, but remember them and think over them always:

If, lastly, thou be ready to undergo all the labours of the sacred ministry, and to give thine own life for the salvation of the sheep whom the LORD, CHRIST, the chief Shepherd, hath so lovingly redeemed with His own Blood:

Do this, O my soul, and then wilt thou make a return, as is fit, for His love.

CHAPTER XXI.

OF ARDOUR OF SOUL WITH REGARD TO HEAVENLY THINGS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I make My ministers a flame of fire, saith My FATHER.

Dost thou wish to be a worthy minister and priest? Take heed that thy heart ever burn for heavenly things: be entirely inflamed.

In the old tabernacle a fire was kept ever burning: this was done in figure.

Learn from this, My son, to foster a holy fire in thy heart: for thy heart is not the figurative, but the real and true tabernacle of thy GOD.

2. I, My son, came down

from heaven to further the glory of My FATHER, and the salvation of souls, drawn not of necessity, but of love.

I came to send fire upon earth, and what will I but that it be kindled? I sent thee to kindle it, and how shalt thou kindle it, if thou have it not—if thou thyself be cold?

Burn, therefore, My son, burn for the glory of GOD: burn for the salvation of souls. Shake off the lukewarmness of a chilling heart: burn in desires, burn in words, burn in works.

3. As the hart desireth the water-brooks, so do thou, moved by some mental influence, pant after the fulfilment of the Divine Will, and the discharge of thy sacred service, to do it rightly.

Let thy whole attention be in this, that nothing be omitted by thee that may conduce to My glory, and the good of thy neighbour.

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. O LORD, my office is above that of angels. Thou hast not committed such a duty to them.

Grant that I may fulfil it with angelical promptitude, fervour, and alacrity.

LORD, the ministry intrusted to me is divine. I do not work it myself, but Thou through me, Thy unworthy servant.

Grant, therefore, that since Thou deignest to honour me thus, I may endeavour to conduct myself in this sacred office with all the zeal and reverence I can.

5. I beseech Thee, O LORD, I humbly beseech Thee, give me the molten gold of holy ardour, that I may minister to Thee with fervour.

O JESU! O fire of heavenly love! Lend unto my heart a spark of that flame that burneth in Thee: excite in me a burning and flaming spirit: impress me with Thy love, that I may worthily perform Thy work.

O Love, who ever burnest and never art extinguished, enkindle me.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF LUKEWARMNESS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Woe be unto thee, if thou grow lukewarm in My service. Woe be unto thee: I shall begin to spew thee out of My Mouth.

O, didst thou not know what an evil it is to displease My Heart, to excite Its loathing, and to be rejected by It as something execrable, thou wouldst fear nothing more than lukewarmness, and the gradual falling away from thy first ardour into carelessness.

2. O, insensate they, who, by their fault in this wise, fall from the vigour of grace, and by degrees deteriorating, in the end become abominable unto Me.

Wretched ones! They believe themselves rich, wanting nothing, and they know not that they are miserable, and blind, and naked.

3. However, My son, there be many such among My priests; how many who, while they hold a position implying perfection, think of nothing less than the pursuit of it.

They indulge their bellies: they conform themselves to the ways of worldlings: they seek entertainments, and frequent them without scruple: they occupy themselves in collecting wealth: they love to shine in the society of women.

They waste their time in empty conversation, sometimes in detraction: they are given up without and within to vanity: they scarce employ any time in the study or meditation on divine things.

They are worldly, animal, earthly, sciolists, and puffed up with vain knowledge: they are ambitious, yet they fear nothing on their own accounts: they will not enter into their hearts and recognize their misery.

4. It is sufficient for these that they go through their functions: that they do not give public scandal: that they feel that their consciences are not laden with deadly sin.

They say that they are not bound to the higher paths of perfection: they

call it either hypocrisy, or not fitted for them: they call a right and tender conscience a scrupulous one.

Thus, they pass all their lives in the common vices, take no heed to poverty of heart, go through their divine duties languidly and in a perfunctory manner, without inward heart or zeal.

O, dangerous state, and the more dangerous, because the danger is not seen.

5. O, My son, if thus thou livest, tremble! Thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting. Fear the anger of the Almighty—cursed is he who doeth His work negligently.

Hasten, then, and without delay make speed to stir up the grace given thee by the laying on of hands.

Cry to the Fountain of Love, to JESUS, Whose property is always to have mercy.

Cry and say, I have erred like a sheep that is lost: seek Thy servant, O LORD.

Cry and say, Save me, O GOD, for the waters have entered in, even unto my soul: take me out of the mire in which I am stuck, and let not the deep swallow me up, nor the pit open its mouth for me.

LORD, Thou killest, and Thou makest to live: have mercy upon me, and restore me to life. Cause Thy judgments to sound in mine ears. Cause all my bones to tremble with fear, that at the voice of Thy terrible trumpet I may rise from my heavy sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF PURE INTENTION.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, Mine Eye was single, and therefore My whole Body was full of light.

I sought not Mine own glory, but the glory of My FATHER. For Him I did all My works, wherefore He was well pleased in Me. I have given thee an ensample that as I did, so shouldst thou do.

Take heed that thou do

not thy righteousness either before men, that thou mayest be seen of them, or for any earthly end, whereby thou mayest be profited.

Thou wouldst serve thyself, and not thy FATHER, whom alone thou shouldst serve: thou wouldst have no treasure in heaven: thou wouldst seek thyself and find thyself, but to thy ruin: thou wouldst rather be usurping the glory due to the FATHER, as did Lucifer.

Shall the pencil, My son, boast of the picture of the painter, or the pen of the writing of the scribe? And what art thou, O vain man, save the vile instrument which My FATHER useth for His will and good pleasure.

2. Watch over thyself, My son: in all things prepare to thyself a holy end, and let not thy feeble mind be distracted or turned aside from the pure end of that service.

The Devil sleepeth not: he is the subtle prince of vanity: he is ever going about, seeking where he may enter, and even mingle himself in thy sacred actions.

Take heed, My son: fire can scarcely be without smoke; if, therefore, thou proposest to do anything from a zeal for the House of GOD, and the good of thy neighbour, take heed, lest Satan pervert the intention to some desire of vain glory.

O, corroding rust: O, devouring moth: how many good works does vain glory destroy every day!

3. Behold the snares of the enemy: how many toils he hideth in the way in which thou shouldst go.

In the beginning of the work, he tries to defeat the intention: in its performance, he insinuates a vain complacency: in the end, he suggests fastidiousness. Watch, therefore, again I say unto thee, watch.

4. Alas! How many wretches does the angel of darkness deceive and ensnare every day?

How many unhappy beings does he lead to sacred orders and the holy mysteries, that they may obtain, not the heavenly bread, but the earthly: not grace, but gain?

Not GOD'S honour, but ambition: not the salvation of souls, but the pursuit of money.

Not to serve Me with a clean heart and body, but that they may be sensual,

rich, and proud: that they may luxuriate on My patrimony, and the alms of My flock.

How many, from this motive, enter my Sanctuary.

O, My son, let not thy foot tread in their footsteps. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. Do thou intend and seek nothing but the pleasure of GOD, and the salvation of thy neighbour, and thou shalt enjoy inward freedom.

O, My son, be zealous for the glory of thy heavenly FATHER, like the best of sons. Ever seek this profit and gain, like a faithful servant.

Cry and say, with all thy heart, Incline my heart unto Thy service, and not unto covetousness.

5. Be strong in battle, and fight with a good courage against the old serpent. Fight in the morning. Watch to GOD early. Offer to His glory all that thou shalt think, and say, and do, expressly renouncing every froward thought that may creep in upon thee.

This will be the strongest shield against the snares of the enemy.

If he should come and seek to appropriate to himself thy works by vain glory, answer, "Thou hast come too late, my all is offered to the Divine Glory, my all is His: nothing remaineth for thee."

6. Fight throughout the day: actually as much as thou canst, offer every work to GOD.

Say unto Him, "LORD, I wish to do this, that I may please Thee, and further Thy glory. I do it to fulfil Thy good pleasure, and therefore I desire to do it as perfectly as I can."

Then be watchful, and if thou seest the serpent of vanity stealthily approaching, meet him and crush his head: slay the serpent while it is little.

Cry, "Foul fiend, I have not begun this work for thee, nor for thee shall I finish it. It is begun for the glory and honour of GOD: I will finish it for the glory and honour of GOD. Get thee behind me, worst of seducers."

7. Watch, after the action is over: examine thyself, and if thou find thyself wounded by the serpent, cure straightway the wound of pride by the remedy of

humiliation. Arise, and be stronger than before.

Lastly, do all thy works in My sight, as if thou saw Me present; and if thou feelest thyself weak, call Me straightway to thine assistance, and I will come and comfort thee.

In this way, My son, in this way, fight, and soon thine eye shall become single, and thy whole body full of light.

CHAPTER XXIV.

OF THE STUDY OF THE FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUES.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I sought not leaves but fruit upon the fig tree, and not finding it, I cursed it and it withered up.

This was done and written for thee, My son, to show that I demand of thee, not the semblance, but the reality of virtue.

Can a whited sepulchre please Me? If I dig therein, I shall find the bones of dead men.

O, My son, do not cleanse only the outside of the cup. It is not meet for thee to make broad thy phylactery.

Know that I am a Spirit, and that they that worship Me, must worship Me in spirit and in truth. For men behold the face: I read the heart.

2. Hear, My son. Thou oughtest to be humble; but it will not be enough for thee to cast down the eyes, to wear common clothing, to bear a simple and modest mien, if walking in these thou canst not bear contempt, then humility is vain: it has become pride.

Thou oughtest to be patient; but it will not be enough for thee to be a lamb in the pasture: thou must be a lamb at the slaughter. If thou refusest to endure tribulation, thy patience is vain, and has become impatience.

Thou oughtest to be obedient: but it will not be sufficient for thee to obey kind masters, refusing duty to the froward: neither must thou obey in some things, and be reluctant in others. If thou refuse to bear to the utmost, thy

obedience is vain, and becomes rebellion.

Thou oughtest to love poverty; but it will not be enough to bear moderate circumstances: thou must bear want. If thou refusest, the poverty is vain: it becomes covetousness.

Thou oughtest to be penitent for thy sins; but it will not be sufficient for thee to confess and bow the back: thou must grieve from thy heart, be pricked in thy spirit, correct thy vices, keep under thy body. Without amendment, penitence is vain: without affliction, mortification is void.

In fine, thou must excel in virtue: it will not do to take heed to the appearance of virtues: thou must labour to obtain them. No one can be conqueror without a fight, no one cultivate virtues without violence to themselves.

3. But who art thou, My son, who hast the name of living, yet art daily dying? Doth not the lightest breath overthrow and cast down thine unreal virtue?

Does not thy chastity fail on the lightest occasion; thy humility on the least flattery; thy patience at the slightest irritation; thy modesty at the faintest praises?

Is not thy temperance upset in entertainments, and thy charity in poverty?

Thy contempt of riches in the chance of gain; thy hatred of honours when in favour with the great?

Is not thy zeal confounded in the presence of the powerful? Dost thou not honour Me with thy lips when thy heart is far from Me?

Be vigilant, and see whether thy works be perfect before Me.

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. O Lord! renew a right spirit within me: strengthen me with Thy free Spirit, that I may establish my heart in solid virtue, and in the holiness of truth: build up the edifice of my salvation, lest when I shall appear before Thee, my Judge, Thou shalt say to me:

Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into My Kingdom: I know thee not: I never knew thee: depart from Me: let thy portion be with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

CHAPTER XXV.

OF LOWLINESS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I am the KING of kings and LORD of lords: I am meek and lowly of heart, My son. Dost thou wish to come after Me? Dost thou wish to be My disciple? Learn this from Me: imitate this: be humble.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, unless thou become like a little child, thou canst not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

I made the world: I worked miracles: I did many wondrous works. I do not tell thee to do likewise; but I washed the feet of My disciples, I, their LORD and Master, and I say to thee that I have given thee an example, that so thou shouldst do.

As My FATHER sent Me, so send I you; therefore as I, sent by the FATHER, taught lowliness by word and deed, so do thou, sent by Me, cultivate the same, that the sheep committed to Me may behold thee, and have in thee that which they may imitate: so that imitating thee, they may imitate Me.

2. My son, thou bearest rule over the others: beware, lest thou turn the blessing thou hast received into an instrument of ambition: beware, lest thou lord it over the heritage.

Pride is hateful to Me, to men, and to angels; yet it easily enters the soul of those who are exalted into a high state by the FATHER, if they watch not carefully.

See how it overcame Lucifer, the prince of the angels, and cast him down from high heaven into the pit of hell.

See how in My very company, in the presence of My humiliation, he tempted the disciples.

They disputed among themselves which should be the greater, and two of them were ambitious to sit on My right and on My left in the kingdom of My FATHER.

Never, then, think thyself safe from temptation to pride. Oh! the greater thou art, lower thyself in all things. Seek not high things, and fear.

Remember, My son, that

thou art vain man—dust and ashes. What is there that thou canst glory in? What hast thou of thyself, save evil, and what good hast thou, save for Me? Where, then, is thy cause for glorying?

But even wert thou good, and believedst thyself rich, is it for thee to lift thy head and exalt thyself, when I, the God of gods, humbled Myself to the death of the Cross.

They crucify Me afresh, and put Me to an open shame, and I am silent. Under so lowly a Head, were it right to be a haughty member?

Place, then, thy face in the dust; let thy soul cleave to the earth for confusion and shame.

4. I resist the proud, but give grace to the simple. Dost thou wish to advance thyself, and to lead others on? be humble.

I am used by the weak things of this world to confound the strong. I, by unlettered fishermen, acquired the earth as Mine inheritance.

Again, I say, be humble, and thou shalt edify thyself and them that hear thee. If elation of mind be sown in with thy good works, thou shalt neither have reward nor reap fruit.

Give not glory to thyself, but attribute it all to God.

Observe those preachers who are confident in their eloquence and wisdom, and who delight too much in the persuasive and plausible words of earthly science.

Are they not barren wombs and dry hearts? They glory but in vain. It is I who give the increase, and give not My glory to another.

Let it not be so with thee, My son; in all things consider thyself the worthless servant.

Speak, animated by this inward persuasion: exhort, labour like a good soldier, and so letting down the net in My Name, thou shalt enclose a great multitude of fishes.

While those who do so in their own strength will come and confess their uselessness, saying, We have toiled all the night and caught nothing.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THE HUMILIATION OF ONESELF.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. I know, O LORD, and confess, that if I wish to be proud and glory in myself, Thou wilt oppose me.

I know, also, that if I lower myself, reduce myself to nothing, and humble myself in that dust which I am, Thy Grace shall be mine, and Thy Light near unto my heart.

Grant, therefore, that I may know my nothingness, and give the glory not unto myself, but unto Thy Name.

Grant that I may recognize my misery, and cry out in the spirit of lowliness, My GOD, I am confounded, and ashamed to lift up my face before Thee!

Grant that I may see my neediness, and sigh forth in my nakedness, "My GOD, look upon me, for I am poor and in misery!"

2. LORD, what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? I am man, miserable man, born of woman, having but a short time to live, and being full of misery.

I am a man, having corruption for my father and mother, and worms for my sisters.

I am a man, who am today as the grass, and tomorrow am cast into the oven: who sprang up as a flower, and am trodden down: who am a vapour that appeareth for a little, and then vanisheth.

I am a man surrounded with infirmity: involved in ignorance and darkness: prone to evil: slow and helpless to good: inconstant as the leaves blown about by the wind: full of imperfections: ever vexed with passions: ever warring and groaning under their burden: I am compelled to cry, LORD, wherefore hast Thou placed Thyself as an adversary against me, and art hard upon me?

Behold of what sort I am, and what is my heritage. Wherefore deignest Thou to open Thine Eyes on such as I am?

3. Yet behold, O LORD, that which casts me down, and humiliates me now in Thy sight, is that I was

born in sin, and in iniquity did my mother conceive me.

Thou regardest man in innocency, and I, before I was born, lost my innocency.

Yet Thou hadst mercy upon me: Thou didst not hide Thy face from me: Thou didst stretch forth Thy Hands unto me. Thou wert He Who took me out of my mother's womb, and Thou didst not refuse to be my GOD. Then was I made pleasing and acceptable unto Thee.

O that I had remained in the innocency I received by my baptism. But alas! no sooner could I think, than I thought evil things: no sooner could I desire, than I desired evil things: no sooner could I act, than I acted sinfully.

Hence, my wickednesses are more in number than the hairs of my head. I have sinned: what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? Where shall I hide myself from the wrath of Thy Countenance?

Every creature has obeyed Thy faithful laws: the sun has shone, the stars glittered, and the earth brought forth, the water flowed, the plants grown, the ox known its master, as Thou hast commanded; but I have not known Thee: I have gone astray from Thy commandments: I have sinned and done evil in Thy sight.

4. I am confounded and ashamed. I cast myself at Thy feet, O FATHER of Mercies! I will come unto Thee, begging pardon.

Perhaps Thou wilt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Yet I cannot say I know I am sure, for I know not whether I am worthy of love or hatred, and how can I in such doubt and anxiety, glory or be uplifted?

O LORD, wash me more and more from my fault, and cleanse me from my sin.

5. Verily, I trust in Thee, Who didst hear the Canaanitish woman, Who didst convert the publican, Who didst absolve the Magdalene, Who didst in mercy look upon Peter, Who didst spare the thief.

I have trusted in Thee, and joyful through that hope, I believe that Thou hast had mercy upon me: that Thou hast covered my sins as with a cloud.

Yet even were this so, where is my cause for glorying? Does it not come from Thee, and is it not Thy pardon? It is not I, but Thou, that hast cleansed me; and however much I may have been cleansed, is it not ever true that I have been a foul and filthy sinner?

Is it not true that I should go back from my new condition to my former, and to an even worse one, were it not that Thy grace kept me?

Grant, O LORD, that I may ever more and more recognise it, and that recollecting all my years in the bitterness of my soul, and ever fearing for my very great frailty, I may always remain lowly in Thy sight.

6. But lo! O LORD, Satan hath sought me, that he may sift me as wheat. He places before me the good I have done, the good I received of Thee.

Why art thou lowly? Why art thou disquieted? Why art thou confounded? he says. Thou rulest well, O priest, thou art worthy of a double honour: thou turnest many to righteousness: thou shalt shine as the stars for ever.

Thou hast done what thy LORD commanded thee, therefore thou art His friend: thou hast kept the faith: thou hast almost finished thy course: a crown of righteousness is laid up for thee.

Behold, LORD, the angel of darkness is transformed into an angel of light! May he be accursed: I will not listen to him.

I know, LORD, that if Thy love be removed, my work will deserve punishment, while I think it worthy of reward.

I know that where gifts are increased, the account to be rendered of them increaseth also; and that I should humble myself, and be willing to serve the more faithfully, as I see the duty of rendering an account obligatory upon me.

O LORD, would that I had never misused, or never failed to use, the many great gifts of Thy grace: would that I had never neglected Thy many inspirations. Verily, Thy gifts are no cause of glory, but of shame.

GOD forbid that I should glory in myself, save in my infirmities, that Thy power may dwell in me.

Grant, O LORD, that I

may ever despise myself, and may love to remain unknown and lightly esteemed.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OF PURITY OF CONSCIENCE.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. O LORD, Who wast begotten of the Eternal FATHER, and the dew of Thy Birth was of the womb of the morning, Thou Whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain, Thou Who art so holy that as the Church marvels, Thou didst not abhor the womb of the Spotless Virgin, Thou Whose latchet John was unworthy to unloose,

Hast chosen me to be steward of Thy Mysteries, that I should daily with my own hands serve at Thine Altar, that Thou shouldst daily come to me and take up Thine abode with me, that I should take and eat Thy Body and give It to others.

Unclean, most unworthy that I am, where shall I go from Thy Spirit? Where shall I fly from Thy Face?

Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O LORD. There is no concord between Thee and Belial, nor consent between Thy Temple and that of idols, nor association of light and darkness.

And how can my mouth be sufficiently pure, my hands clean, my heart pure, for so divine a service?

The Voice of the Beloved.

2. Thou oughtest not, My son, to be cast down and disturbed by the contemplation of My dignity.

I, indeed, am all-holy, and thou art dust; but I know whereof thou art made, and I know in thee I have a man and not an angel for My minister.

I ask not of thee consummate cleanness, but the first care for acquiring it. Do what is in thy power, and that diligently, and if anything is wanting, I will speak the word and supply all.

3. Woe be to thee, My son, if thou didst not what is in thy power: if thou wert to approach My offering in sin, thou wouldst pollute My House, despise My Table, and eat and drink damnation to thyself.

Verily, I say to thee, diligently seek after a pure conscience. See that ever with clean hands and a pure heart thou approach to the blessing and mercy of My Sanctuary.

Let thy soul be ever in thy hands, lest it be defiled with wicked desires and thoughts, stained by froward words, corrupted by vicious actions.

Judge thyself, that thou be not judged: and if thou see the fine gold of thy soul dimmed by any spot, if thou perceive the fine colour changed by the departure of My grace, let not the sun set on thy sin, My son: go straight to the Pool of Siloam, that thou mayest be washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

Go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift of tears and a contrite heart right humbly, so that when thou hast fallen thou shalt not be dashed down, for I will place My Hand under thee.

The Voice of the Disciple.

Hold, O LORD, my right hand, and lead me according to Thy Will, that I slip not.

I said in my abundance, I shall never be moved. I swore and determined to keep the statutes of Thy righteousness. Yet, if Thou turnest Thy Face from me, I shall be humbled, and shall straightway err and be unclean.

Behold, O LORD, mine infirmity: make speed to help me. Be ever at my right hand, that I be not a vessel of destruction, but may ever go to Thine Altar in innocency.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OF HATRED OF ONESELF.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, My son, he that loveth his life, shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world, shall keep it unto life eternal. And why so? sayest thou, My son. Hearken, and understand:

This life, of which I speak, is not thy spirit: but it is that life which belongeth to this world; it is thy flesh which hath the breath of life in it.

Yea, My son, if thou lovest this, thou shalt perish: if thou hatest this, thou shalt be saved.

For if thou lovest this, thou wilt live according to it: and if thou live according to it, thou shalt die.

But if thou hate it, thou wilt mortify the deeds thereof through the spirit: and if thou mortify the deeds of the flesh through the spirit, thou shalt live.

2. May be, My son, thou dost not as yet comprehend this mystery. Listen, then, and hear further still:

Thou knowest that the lusts of the flesh are altogether opposed to My Laws and to My Commandments.

Thou knowest that thy nature persuadeth thee to be proud, avaricious, given to pleasure, to be envious, intemperate, idle: whereas I direct thee to be humble, just, to despise riches, to be charitable, chaste, sober, full of works.

Thou knowest that thy flesh lusteth after worldly advantages: whereas I teach thee self-denial and repentance.

By loving thy flesh, therefore, thou wilt fulfil the lusts thereof; thou wilt commit forbidden things; the good things which are commanded thou wilt not do; and so thou wilt destroy thy flesh with thy life also.

3. But thou wilt say, My son: No doubt it is necessary that I should be temperate in loving my flesh, and that I should not allow its desires to go beyond certain sacred rules: it is necessary that I should keep down the excess of its lusts.

But this I may do: though I do not absolutely hate it.

Thou art wrong, My son. For no man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

Since, therefore, the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, it must be that thou love one or the other: that thou hate one or the other. And if thou seekest for a reason still, hear wherefore it is so.

If thou desire, My son, to obey the spirit, thou must needs be armed against the wiles of the flesh—thou must rise up and fight.

Thy whole life must be a continual warfare against the flesh, so long as thou shalt continue in this world.

But, if thy flesh be dear to thee, how canst thou put on thine armour against it? how wilt thou stand up and fight?

Surely, there is no man who would wish to fight against his dearly-beloved friend; or if any man be compelled to do so, he only doeth it in pretence: he neither seeketh the victory nor getteth it.

But if he taketh up arms against one whom he hateth, and holdeth as an offensive enemy, he is in earnest, he is instant, he stabs him, he overcometh him.

Behold, then, My son, that there is no other way for thee to overcome thy flesh except by hating it.

4. But thou wilt say again, My son: What man is there who can thus hate his flesh? and who, then, can be saved?

O, son! This is true: this is not the work of one day, nor is it the play of little children.

With men this is, indeed, impossible: but with Me all things are possible.

Wouldest thou, My son, obtain this precious gift of hating thine own flesh?

Stretch out thine hands unto Me.

Lift up thy hands to thy God Which is in heaven: direct thy prayer unto Me as incense in My sight.

Say, My son, with earnest desire: O Lord, I know that Thy will is my sanctification.

Grant me, therefore, this grace which Thou hast shown to be so needful for me, that I may hate my flesh, which enticeth me to sin and to perdition.

Bow down Thine ear, O LORD, and hear me: for, as regards this, I am weak and feeble.

Hear me; for I have need of Thy grace, and of Thy grace abundantly.

Grant me, I pray Thee, to lay aside all affection for the body of this death.

Grant that, in mind, I may be freed from it.

Grant that, for Thy sake, I spare it not, even as Thou didst not spare Thine own SON for my sake: so that henceforth I may live unto Thee alone. Ask, My son, and thou shalt receive.

5. But that thou mayest be induced still more to hate thy flesh, meditate frequently on the wretchedness and baseness of that same flesh.

Reflect what a base origin it hath, how weak a substance, how short a duration, how vile an end.

How many wants and diseases it is subject to: to how many perils it is liable: how prone to evil, how slow to good.

Remember that there neither hath been, nor is, scarcely any atrocity of which it hath not been either the cause or the instrument.

That there is no kind of sin to which it would not lead thee, if thou obey it.

And at last, that thou wilt go into eternal damnation together with it, except thou subdue and crucify it.

O, son! How canst thou love that flesh which is the origin of so many miseries.

6. Take, My son, take rather the sword of the Spirit, and fight against this worst of enemies.

Bind it to the Cross, crucify it with CHRIST: give not over until it be dead together with Him that was crucified.

Thus wilt thou bring it to pass, that, being stript of its infirmities and lusts, hereafter it shall rise again, adorned with the glorious gifts of CHRIST.

Verily, it must needs be, that to prayer and to meditation on the miseries of thy flesh thou add the mortification of the same.

"Bread, correction, and work for a servant." My son, so mortify thy members, that the soul may be saved alive.

Give it bread. If thy flesh hunger, give it meat; if it thirst, give it drink; but as if to a foe, granting necessaries, denying gratifications: nay, rather giv-

ing bitter and unpleasant things.

Give it correction: by holding in, with strict restraints, thy mouth, thine ears, eyes, and the rest of thy senses: yea, even by chastising their faults with stripes, or by correcting them with other severities.

Give it work: so that whenever the devil shall desire to provoke thy flesh with any evil deed, he may always find it employed.

Truly, My son, if thou put away idleness from thee, thou wilt keep thyself safe from much evil.

So bring thy flesh into subjection: lest, when thou hast preached to others and saved many, thou thyself be a castaway.

Be of good cheer, dearly beloved: is not every man that striveth for the mastery temperate in all things?

And they do it to obtain a corruptible crown: but thou an incorruptible.

7. Lastly, My son, that thou mayest the more easily carry out these precious instructions which I have given thee, turn thine eyes frequently upon Me, thy Saviour.

Behold Me, but just born, lying in a hard manger: at eight days old, patiently enduring the knife of circumcision: shortly after, a miserable fugitive in Egypt.

Behold Me, brought up in the greatest poverty in My Mother's house, not having where to lay My head; fasting for forty days in the desert.

Behold Me, at My Passion, bound with chains, broken with scourges, crowned with thorns, stricken, smitten, fainting under the Cross.

Behold Me, nailed to the Cross, having vinegar and gall given Me to drink, at length giving up the ghost with a loud cry. Behold how I hated My flesh.

8. O, son! If I spared not My flesh, but in such wise gave it up to die for thy salvation: if so lovingly I bore the punishment of thy transgressions in it: do thou, then, fill up that which is behind of My afflictions in My flesh.

If thou art not able to afflict thyself, at least bear it patiently when I correct thee in mercy.

Bear diseases, bear pains, bear troubles, bear patiently the loss of worldly goods.

Bear calumnies and reproaches, bear persecutions, bear patiently the labours of the sacred ministry.

If thou art not able to hate thy flesh with so great a hatred as entirely to bury it in death with Me, at least hate it so much that thou mayest keep it always in subjection to My Law, to My Commandments, to My Will, to reason, to religion, and the work of the ministry.

Well done: be of good cheer, My son: the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF WATCHFULNESS OVER INDIVIDUAL SINS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. O, My son, thou who eatest My Bread, and givest It to others, be cleansed thyself from all faults, and be washed from thy sin.

Thy senses, and the thoughts of thine heart, incline thee to evil; and unless thou often have recourse to the fountain of mercy and grace, thou canst scarcely be undefiled in My way.

Thou canst scarcely fulfil the sacred offices of the holy ministry.

Thou knowest this, My son: thou teachest thy flock that frequent confession of thy sin more and more destroys iniquity, turns away from sin, preserves from evil, strengthens in godliness, nourishes watchfulness,

Keeps in My way, strengthens against temptation, pours a holy peace into the soul, increaseth fervour, and makes man purer day by day.

Thou teachest, thou believest, that he who neglects this, day by day, falls away; ceases to know himself; gets, by degrees, used to sin;

Day by day becomes fainter in fight against his enemies; falls more easily into the snares of the devil; rises again with more difficulty.

2. What thou teachest, My son, do thou, in the first place, practise. Confess thy sins often, for its

necessity is great in thee, who shouldst be more watchful and more holy than those around thee.

The devil is more hostile to thee: and thou shouldst be at every time prepared for the performance of holy offices.

And to perform these without the requisite cleanness of heart, may soon lull thee into sleep of the soul, and into a horrible darkness of mind.

For this reason, many are sickly among you, and some sleep; who, if they searched themselves oftener by confession, would not be smitten with blindness when I judge them.

3. Verily, My son, thou hast often seen men, who in the beginning of their priesthood were holy, and obtained the praise of all, who in the end have become unrighteous, not even retaining the shadow of their former walk.

Whence is this? you will ask, My son. It is from neglect of confession. The devil, knowing the fruit of this holy exercise, has ever striven to withdraw them from it.

What is the use, he suggests, of continual confession? Why uselessly torment yourself?

Behold, you live well, your daily faults are trifles: wait till some great sin comes.

Then he begins to deceive, and what happens? They trusted too much in their holiness: they deprive themselves of the grace of Sacramental absolution, and they easily fall.

After a little, they are tempted again; they fall again. What does Satan do? He excites a hatred of confession.

Wait; you have time. You need not celebrate tomorrow.

The celebration is postponed. Obstacles come in the way. At last, celebration is necessary; the people are assembled, and no opportunity of showing oneself to the priest occurs.

An act of contrition is made, but an imperfect one, and therefore the sin remains.

A sacrilegious celebration follows, and the very celebration comforts them falsely.

When the service is over, there is no thought of Ananias.

Before the next celebration, there are some prickings of conscience: before the third, that has ceased.

Afterwards, they grow satisfied with their sin, and join low living to high ministry.

4. Take heed, My son, that this happen not to thee. When the time comes, do not put off from day to day.

Say not, I am clean, I want nothing. For he that saith he hath no sin, deceiveth himself, and the truth is not in him.

Whoever thou art, thou art not holier than My Saints, and not more perfect than My perfect ones.

Read, My son, their lives, and see how frequently they confessed their sins.

It is the character of the just to fear always; and the more love, the more fear.

If the righteous scarcely believe he shall be saved, who art thou, not to avail thyself of all means of securing it.

5. Verily, if thou art a good shepherd, thou takest heed that the sheep committed to thee perform their duty; and if they fail, thou spurrest, and chidest, and threatenest them.

But if thou neglect thyself, who is there to attend, and watch, and check thee? No one.

If thy sheep wander, thou criest out; but who is there to cry to thee?

See how great perils hang over thee, if thou neglect this.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF LITTLE SINS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, despise not small things. Thou mayest fall little by little. Thou art afraid of great sins, but possibly thou fearest not little vices.

Thou art wrong, My son. A little fire is so; but if neglected, it may enkindle a forest. A slight infirmity is so; but it may increase and bring death.

Do buildings fall at once? No, My son; but first the drop falls and is neglected, then the water gets in, then the mortar is moistened,

the stones loosened, the walls fall, and the house at last is overthrown.

See how dangerous it is to despise little things: had the wall been looked to, the house had yet stood; but because a little evil was neglected, it is now no more.

From this a wise man has said, I say something wonderful and unheard of, yet it sometimes appears to me that it is not the great sins, but the little ones, that must be cared for:

For the very nature of sin makes us turn from the one, but we neglect the others because they are small; and if we despise them, we are not likely to eject them.

2. O, My son, thou who neglectest small things, observe water coming in, little by little, through the chinks of a ship: you may stop it and bale it out, if taken in time: if you neglect it, it will fill the hold.

What does it matter in shipwreck, whether the vessel founder by a great wave, or sink by degrees.

Wherefore, do thou shun little sins; often examine thyself; search if thou hast committed aught; wipe them away, lest they lead thee into deadly sin.

But thou sayest, they are small sins. They do not make me the foe of GOD. I need not be so very careful about them.

True, My son; nor am I forced to give thee special graces and efficacious aid to keep thee and to cover thee.

If thou art so careless of My friendship that thou only fearest My hatred, take heed, lest I take from thee the higher graces and more effective aids.

So that, in the slippery paths of this life, thou shalt easily fall; so, falling into the hands of the worst foes, deprived of the shield of My protection, thou shalt easily be wounded. How canst thou trust I shall be careful of thee, when thou regardest so little Me?

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. O LORD, how often have I said, Peace, peace, when there is no peace—and very likely I say so now. How many little sins do I deliberately and knowingly commit.

Can I say that I love Thee, Whom I vex so often, or at least, fear not to vex?

Grant, O LORD, that I may love Thee more ardently, so that I may abstain from every sin.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF REPENTANCE OF LITTLE SINS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, whosoever wisheth to be made whole, must sorrow. Many confess their little sins, yet few are cleansed, because the true grief of contrition and intention of amendment is not there.

They confess from a dry custom. The will to correct themselves, and to mend really, they do not try to have with them from their hearts.

If thou wilt really be cleansed, thou must really be displeased with thyself. Take not the balance of man—which is a false one—but the balance of My Sanctuary: and in that weigh thy sins.

Thou wilt see, if they be small, how many they be: thou wilt see that they displease and offend Me; how they loosen My friendship; how they vex My Spirit; how they cool down the ardour of charity; how they destroy the zeal and willingness of devotion; how they retard the steps in the way of salvation; how they place stumbling-blocks in the way of receiving grace.

O, if these things reached thy heart, how bitterly wouldst thou bewail little failings. O, if thou didst but behold My Saints, what tears they shed for such, thou wouldst not withhold thine.

2. Make a firm determination, not from thy velleity, but from thy most sincere will. Watch thy besetting ones, which thou drinkest in as water, and say, I will do so no more. If the enemy come, I will act as a man—I will fight, I will conquer. Thou shalt then be cleansed; and, so cleansed, thou shalt be improved.

Protected by these two shields, horror of sin and a firm resolve, thou shalt be vigilant. In whatsoever hour the enemy cometh, thou shalt resist him; and thou shalt not allow—at least, willingly and knowingly—thy house to be broken into.

3. Howsoever, My son,

do not hope to be preserved from all sin. Thy frailty is great, and prone to evil.

To-day, thou wilt confess thy sins, and to-morrow, perhaps, again do the same: so predetermine to avoid them; and, an hour hence, thou actest as if nothing had happened. Take care, lest this frailty of thy nature become an excuse to thee in case of negligence.

Shall fine linen not be washed, because fresh use of it shall soil it again? Certainly not.

So thou, who bearest a frail body, though thou be cleansed, yet art not long without sin: yet be patient, be not disturbed, turn humbly and quickly from weakness to cure, from infirmity to repentance.

Often confess then. If thou confessest thy sins, I am faithful and just to forgive thee thy sin, not until seven times, but until seventy times seven. For there is no end of My mercy, and the treasury of My goodness is inexhaustible.

CHAPTER XXXII.

OF UNWORTHY CELEBRATION OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Come unto Me, and I will refresh thee, My son. But, in coming unto Me, prepare thy soul.

I am the terrible GOD, and very great—to Whom the sinner and his wickedness are hateful—Who judge and condemn those that approach Me unworthily—confirming by My Body and Blood, on him the curse of Mine Almighty anger.

Try thyself: inquire of thine heart: examine thy ways; and if there be any way of wickedness in thee, beware, lest, stained with sin, thou cross the sacred threshold; but confound thyself before Me for thine unworthiness; and however contrite thou mayest be, take heed not to come to the Altar without previous confession of thy sin.

2. O My son, I am thy meek and gentle King, Who have heaped so many benefits upon thee; and wilt

thou betray Me with a kiss? I am thy GOD; and wouldst thou betray Me to Satan, who possesseth thy heart?

I am thy SAVIOUR; and wouldst thou crucify Me afresh? I am the Most Holy One; and wouldst thou place Me in the unclean tomb of a foul conscience?

Friend, wherefore art thou come hither? It had been better for thee if thou hadst never been born.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. Such iniquity be far from me, O LORD. Rather let my tongue cleave to my jaws. Rather let my right hand forget her cunning. Rather take my life than let such a wickedness be perpetrated by me.

It were better far for me, a most vile creature, to die, than for Thee, my CREATOR, thus by me to be contemptuously trodden under foot.

O LORD, Who art very good! O GOD of gods! LORD of lords! who is he that will betray Thee?

The Voice of the Beloved.

4. O, My son, who is it? Would it were one only. Would it were two; but, alas! how many are there who not once but daily betray Me and crucify Me?

Daily to My Altar come the proud, the lovers of pleasure, the lustful, the greedy, the partakers in other men's sins.

These handle Me with unclean hands, receive Me in unholy mouths, accept Me into a fetid heart, and count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing. I am polluted in the midst of them.

I could, My son, free Me from their hands. I could send forth My lightnings and arrows, scathe and slay them, but they would perish, and I desire not the death of the wicked. O! if they would be converted and do what is right.

O, most evil generation! How long shall I be near unto you? how long will ye err in your hearts? how long will ye not spare Me? What ye do, do quickly.

Yet My mercy shall be turned into judgment against you. I have sworn in My wrath that ye shall not enter into My rest.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, make ready for Me an upper chamber, for I shall celebrate the Passover with thee, and it must now be that I abide in thy house. An honoured place is made for an expected King, the best room reserved for the coming friend.

I, My son, am thy gentle King; I, thy Beloved, Who feed among the lilies; I, thy God, Whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Measure, then, thy devotion by My condescension. Ascend in thought to Me, Who have descended to thy nothingness out of affection for thee.

Let not the cleanness of the habitation of thine heart suffice: gather together in thy soul the gold of love and the frankincense of piety by devout recollection.

2. O ye, who are neither hot nor cold; O, indifferent and lukewarm ones, who scarce care for My visit—who, without a decent delay, turn from your lowest household cares to My Sacrifice—what shall I say unto you?

Behold your tables all laid early for your guests; the food prepared for days before; yet for Me, coming to meet you, scarce a moment is devoted to deck your upper chamber.

They who come to your feasts, perchance, neither love you nor honour you; but I love you.

They come to you that they may feast of yours; but I come unto you that ye may feast of Me.

They consume your substance: I come that I may increase and add to your riches. You do honour them, but do dishonour Me.

O ye sons of men, why are ye so disquieted? Why love ye vanity, and lightly esteem My goodness? Your soul sickens at Me as at tasteless food.

O foolish ones, what hath beguiled you? O lukewarm ones, whom I can scarce endure, soon shall I begin to spue you from My Mouth.

3. Arise, My son, rise quickly; be not lukewarm,

like them, but come quickly and meet Me.

Come, and considering My greatness and thy vileness, cry out with the Centurion, that thou art unworthy.

Come, and, like Zaccheus, burning with love, receive Me with joy into thine house, trusting that to thee, by My visitation, salvation is come.

Come, and, like righteous Abel, make thy offering with the best intention: thus thy holocaust shall be acceptable. It will give glory to the FATHER, joy to heaven, usefulness to the Church, salvation to thee, grace to the just, conversion to the sinners, help to the needy, repose to wait for Me everywhere.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OF THANKSGIVING AFTER THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I the Eternal Word, made flesh, have dwelt with thee, My son. I, the Living Bread, which came down from heaven: I the True Light: I, full of grace and truth: and I, full of power and strength: I, of Whose mercy there is no measure, am with thee, and My reward is with Me.

I am with thee, that I may save thee and free thee from the hand of evil doers; to redeem thee from the hand of the strong.

O, didst thou but know the gift of GOD, and Who it is reposeth in thy heart; verily, thy heart would become as melted wax in My sight: all the faculties of thy powers would be absorbed in ecstasy: thine eyes would overflow with tears of love and gratitude.

Without doubt, thou wouldst, from very fulness, desire nothing else in this world, and wouldst bid farewell to all things.

Without doubt, thou wouldst silently and beyond sense be wrapt, and wouldst keep silence, in My love.

Without doubt, thou wouldst embrace My Beloved, and give thyself, all, without restriction, to Him.

Certainly, thou wouldst,

from so benign a FATHER, seek with confidence excellent gifts.

Certainly, thou wouldst, from so powerful a King, seek every aid of grace against thy most powerful enemies.

Certainly, thou wouldst, with the greatest devotion, present JESUS abiding in thee and made thine own, as a most excellent gift to the FATHER.

No doubt, thou wouldst call on all the hosts of holy spirits to sing glory to the Beloved in the highest.

2. My son, there is no other nation so great as to have GOD coming unto it, as I visit My priests.

How, then, is it, that many of these, as if despising My great love, and not regarding it as they ought, do not desire to honour Me —present in their hearts— with sacred praise even for a short time.

Scarce leave they My Altar and Church than they enter on secular concerns. The meat is still in their mouths, and they forget the good GOD Who feeds them. O, ungrateful ones! O, sons of light, less wise than the children of darkness.

The children of this world, when visited by king or potentate, detain him, that he may not quickly leave them; they salute, ingratiate, offer, ask, seek, rejoice, that they can, face to face, speak to their prince, show their love, evince their reverence, lay bare their necessities—and all this that they may honour a mortal prince, and receive a corruptible reward.

O, sons of light, fools and slow of heart to believe! the men of Nineveh shall rise in the last day against you, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

The Queen of the South shall arise, and shall condemn you, because she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

The men of Jerusalem shall rise against and shall condemn you, because they wished to make Me, when I conversed among them, a king; and behold, I am KING of kings, and your GOD: I am among you, and ye depart and leave Me unhonoured.

3. My son, far be it from thee that thou shouldst desire to depart: far, very far be it from thee.

When thou leavest the Altar, return to Me, that thou mayest hear Me, for I have the words of eternal life; and taste and see that I am gracious, that thy heart may burn within thee while I speak unto thee.

Me, thy LORD GOD, present within thee, with all devotion adore thou: with angels and archangels, hymns to My glory sing thou: nor leave thou Me till, by thy blessings, thou bring down blessing from Me.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON MENTAL PRAYER.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. This is thy work, My son, to be active in prayer and in the ministry of the word. I spent the whole night in prayer that thou mightest learn to pray, and to pray without ceasing.

Men, in breathing, draw in the air, and live thereby; thou, who art a priest, oughtest to live in heaven, and draw in the Heavenly Spirit.

O My son, how necessary is it that I should direct all thy steps and all thy ways in the ministry which thou hast undertaken. How great, how holy, how perilous is that ministry.

Keep, therefore, the eyes of thy mind ever raised unto thy FATHER which is in heaven; to Me, Who sit at His Right Hand, that thence continual help may ever come unto thee: that thou mayest take the wings of an eagle: that thou mayest run and not faint: that thy steps may be perfect in My ways, and that thy footsteps slip not.

2. In this way, by prayer, S. James, whom I chose to be an Apostle, drew in to himself by prayer the greatest spirit of sanctity, for his knees, by the frequency of his prayers, became hard as a camel's.

Another holy man, Martin, relaxed not the unwearied spirit of prayer.

O, my son, thou canst do as these did, if thou hadst but the mind! O, wouldst

thou but taste, thou wouldst see that the LORD was gracious.

He is ever found by those who seek Him. He opens to those that knock. He assents to those that petition. O, taste, and see.

3. Son, let prayer arise with thee: let it watch with thee on thy bed: let it accompany thy praises: let it go before and with thee in the Church: let it sit with thee when thou eatest and drinkest: let it return thanks with thee when the frugal meal is over.

Let it pass with thee the time of the labours of the day: let it follow thee to thy couch: let it, at eventide, cleanse thee from the soils of earth: let it close thine eyes in sleep: let it ever dwell with thee.

4. Observe, My son, I do not commend to thee that form of prayer only which thy duties demand of thy heart and mouth, but, besides, that of the secret heart.

There, then, when thou hast shut the door, thou shouldst pray unto the FATHER. There thou canst lift up thy heart to Me at all times, and in all places; canst offer Me thyself and thine all; ask of Me blessings: embrace Me out of love; bow thyself before Me; adore Me.

Let this prayer to the GOD of thy life be ever thy practice; let this be thy companion in every work and design of thy life.

5. This, My son, is the water which becometh a fountain, springing up into eternal life.

If thou wilt have it, come, and I will show thee the fountain of the gardens, the well of living water whence it is drawn.

That fountain and well is the meditation on My Commandments. To this thou shouldest devote a portion of each day.

Let it be thy care to select daily some truth of the life-giving faith specially: to place it before thine eyes: to consider it attentively in My presence: to refer it to thyself: and from the thought of it, to form a course of conduct therefrom.

Then thou wilt find water; and if thou willest it, thou wilt find thy whole body will be wondrously and sweetly moistened: that is, all thy works will be sanctified, for it shall bring forth fruit in due season.

6. O my son, neglect not

mental prayer, otherwise thou shalt soon become salt without savour, a lantern without a light.

Wherefore with desolation the land is desolate, because no man layeth it to heart.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF THE VARIOUS KINDS OF MENTAL PRAYER.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Every one hath his proper gift from GOD—one of one kind, another of another.

All men are not, My son, capable of the same in the matter of mental prayer. To some is given to reach the summit of contemplation; but this is insisted on of no one. It is reserved for those whom My FATHER may draw to it.

And then, if thou feelest not thyself specially called to this, mind not things of high estate. Stand thou in the way of the simple, and judge thyself unworthy of being raised unto higher things.

If thou canst do little in the way of meditation, do that little carefully, and thou shalt profit greatly.

2. Say not, My son, "I cannot, I know not how to pray." If thou canst not, with John, contemplate divine and lofty things, thou canst cast thyself, with Mary Magdalene, at My Feet, and, with broken spirit and contrite heart, seek the forgiveness of thy sins, wherewith thou hast so often offended Me.

If thou canst not, with Paul, fly up to the third heaven, yet, with him, thou mayest abide in Me crucified, by crucifying the flesh with its lusts and vices.

If thou hast not eagles' wings to raise thee to the stars, yet thou canst have those of a simple dove. At least thou canst meditate on the Wounds and affronts of My Passion.

Believe me, My son, thou wilt find more holiness in the thought of the Passion than all the wise and sages find in the contemplation of the heights of heaven.

3. If thou canst not make

but distracted prayers and meditations, make them at least, and offer them to Me.

Be a man of good will: My Ear will hear thy preparation. Those mites which thou throwest in My treasury, according to thy ability, will be pleasing unto Me.

Thou knowest, My son, how that I praised the widow who only cast in two mites; wherefore, notwithstanding any involuntary distraction which may carry thy mind away, continue what thou hast begun: persevere in My presence, and interrupt not the time dedicated to prayer.

These exercises please Me, when thou hast served Me at thine own expense.

4. Be not thou, therefore, cast down, but in lowliness confess thyself unworthy of greater consolation.

Say, humbly, in confidence and simplicity, LORD, as far as it is my fault in that I have given occasion to these distractions, I greatly grieve; but in so far as they proceed from Thy Will, I confess them to be the just and deserved punishment of my sins, chastising my faults, and my past offences and negligences.

Wherefore, with willing mind, I accept, at Thy Hand, this cross, this dryness, this distraction, this banishment of my wretched heart.

5. But, here, My son, is means suited to thy poor estate at once simple and obvious. Take a book: read therein: leaning on this as on a staff, thy mind will more easily rest, and wandering thoughts will more quickly be restrained.

Indeed, occupy thyself with pious reading: pause and meditate on single sentences, or on the words, one by one. Soon shall thine understanding be enlightened, thy affection excited by pondering on what thou readest, not from the love of reading and desire of knowledge, but from the eagerness of virtue and love.

Thus read, thus taste, thus digest, and thou shalt be nourished.

What thou feedest on, daily ruminate on: ponder My testimonies; renew thy resolutions, that they may be stronger, and more and more influence thy heart by holy aspirations.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE LOVE OF GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

For this is the first and greatest commandment. Do this, My son, and thou shalt live.

But if thou wilt not do it, verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt not enter into the joy of thy LORD, thou shalt not dwell in His Tabernacle, thou shalt not rest upon His holy hill, thou shalt not see His Face.

Thou believest this, thou teachest this: but how dost thou act, My son?

Lovest thou Me? Thou shepherd of My sheep, lovest thou Me more than them? art thou thyself fervent, whose duty it is to make others so? art not thou like unto him that sayeth, but doeth not?

The Voice of the Disciple.

2. What shall I say, O LORD? and what shall I answer unto Thee? Thou hast told me a wonderful thing: on this hangeth the whole law.

Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O LORD. Give me what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.

Teach me to love Thee; so that, even though late, yet with surety I may answer, "In truth, my GOD, in truth I love Thee."

The Voice of the Beloved.

3. O My son, thou judgest right, if thou dost earnestly desire My love.

For, in truth, if thou hast not charity, whatever else thou mayest be, thou art nothing: whatever else thou mayest possess, it profiteth thee nothing.

I have asked thee, My son, I have said unto thee, Lovest thou Me? But fear hath taken hold on thee; thou hast not dared to answer.

And yet, My son, once more I ask, Lovest thou Me? Still art thou silent!

Thou hast seen Peter declaring that, for My love, he was ready to go into

prison and to death: soon after, the same Peter hast thou seen denying Me: and therefore thou wast afraid to answer with him.

It is well, My son; but if thy mouth dare not answer, then let thy works answer.

By these things, I shall know whether thou lovest thy GOD—not in word nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

4. O, My son, whoso truly loveth his friend, frequently thinketh of him, and willingly converseth with him.

And dost thou love to recall My presence to thy mind? To hold communion with Me in prayer? To visit in My Temple?

This if thou doest willingly, be of good cheer, My son; thou lovest Me.

5. Whoso truly loveth his friend, doth willingly lay open to him the very secrets of his heart, doth freely ask for his advice, with joy doth sit down at his table, with pleasure doth behold him sitting down at his own table.

And thou, My son, art thou wont faithfully to expose to Me the griefs and sorrows of thy heart? Willingly to confess thy shortcomings and thy faults, with singleness of heart and with sadness, at My judgment-seat? Art thou wont constantly to seek for counsel from Me, and, when it is received, faithfully to follow it?

Is it thy wont, with exultation, to approach My Altar, and, by thy loving-kindness towards the poor, freely to admit Me to thy table?

My son, if, indeed, thou doest these things, be of good cheer; assuredly thou lovest Me.

6. Whoso truly loveth his friend, strictly and readily obeyeth his wishes; from those things which are displeasing to his friend, he carefully keepeth himself.

And thou, My son, dost thou faithfully keep My Commandments? Dostthou as from the face of a serpent fly from sin, which I hate with the utmost hatred?

O, son! If thou strictly doest these things, be of good cheer; thou lovest Me truly.

7. Lastly, whoso is so devoted to his friend as to be ready to give him all that he hath—as always to strive to please him in all things—as freely, for his sake, to give up his own soul—he,

My son, loveth his friend above all things. No greater love can he have.

And art thou, then, intent upon those things which are well-pleasing to Me, to the end that thou mayest always do them?

Dost thou set before thee, and do, all things for the increase of My glory?

Art thou ready to give up all things for My sake?

Art thou ready even to meet death for Me, and for those who are Mine? so that thou wouldest rather lay down thy life than in any way to offend Me: so that thou wouldest readily spend thy life again and again for the salvation and the sanctification of My sheep?

If thou dost this, rejoice, and be exceeding glad; thou lovest truly, thou lovest much.

8. But, My son, no man can serve two masters.

And if thou givest up thyself more readily to earthly thoughts than to holy meditation;

If thou lovest more to hear and speak of temporal matters than of Me, and of those things which relate to Me;

If thou treatest secular matters more attentively and more carefully than the holy offices;

If thou delightest to visit the followers of the world, rather than to frequent My Temples;

If thou longest for the feasts of men more than for the Altars of thy GOD;

If thou carest for the abundance and delicacies of thy house more than for My misery and want in the poor, than for the comfort and welfare of thy brethren;

If thou fearest sickness and anguish more than sin;

If thou grievest more for earthly loss than for an offence against thy GOD;

If thou labourest for temporal gain more readily than in overcoming faults, in gaining souls, in glorifying thy GOD;

If this thou dost, what shall I say of thee? O, My son! Thou sayest, indeed, that thou lovest Me; but thou honourest Me with thy lips, and thy heart is far from Me.

O wretched man! Thou blind fool! Thou lovest thyself alone: and Me thou lovest not.

9. But what then? Am not I the LORD thy GOD, the Holy One of Israel, thy SAVIOUR?

My son, was not thy heart made to love that which is good? Dost thou not know that I am the chief and the only Good?

Amongst men themselves, are not the perfect, the kind, the just, the wise, the fair, the learned, the meek, said to be loveable, and worthy of love?

Dost thou not know, then, that I am loving-kindness itself, justice, mercy, meekness, wisdom, beauty, knowledge—nay, the very fulness of all perfection?

Doth not the ox know its master? Dost thou not know that I am thy CREATOR, thy KING, thy FATHER, Who made thee, Who fed thee, saved thee, Who prepared the whole world for thy wants?

Doth not the sheep which is found love its good shepherd? Dost thou not know that I am thy very best of shepherds, Who, following thee in the desert, sought thee, found thee, bore thee on My shoulders, and carried thee to the sheepfold rejoicing?

Doth not the redeemed captive love his redeemer? Dost thou not know, My son, that I redeemed thee, not with gold nor with silver, but with Mine Own Blood?

Yea, My son, have not I, thy GOD, chosen thee as My servant, as My priest, and so have honoured and exalted thee?

10. What is there which I ought to have done for thee, and I have not done it? Wherefore, then, forgettest thou Me? Why dost thou not love Me?

O wretched man! Why, indeed? Listen!

It is because thou art worldly: because thy belly cleaveth unto the dust, and thou regardest nought but this world, and the things which are in the world.

The world deceiveth thee with its fallacies: thou art ensnared, taken captive, blinded. O, thou natural man! Thou receivest not all things which belong unto thy GOD.

Lift up thy heart, My son. I have said unto thee, Love not the world. Now, at least, cease to regard the world: lift up thine eyes to Me.

Behold the sun, and then will that pitiful lantern, which thou hast loved, please thee no longer.

Contemplate the supreme goodness of thy GOD: think over the innumerable benefits which thy LORD hath bestowed upon thee.

And then wilt thou exclaim, Woe to the darkness in which I once lay! I have found the true light of my soul.

Him have I found Whom my soul sought after; my GOD, He is my rest.

Surely all is vanity, save to love GOD and keep His Commandments.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ON THE TIME OF MENTAL PRAYER.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, in the morning meditate upon Me, and I will be thy helper.

O priest! Day by day lay on the wood early in the morning, so that upon My Altar the fire may be kept up and burn continually.

Prayer, made early in the morning, driveth away darkness, and openeth the soul to divine light; it consecrateth the first-fruits of thy thoughts and of the actions of the day to Me, the LORD of all, Whom, first of all, and before all, and above all, every creature is bound to serve.

O, My son, if I be thy treasure, on Me, at the first dawn of day, let thy heart be fixed.

2. Hearken, My son, and blush for shame. The heathen themselves, at daybreak, adored their gods, confessing that "the origin of all is from Jove." What, then, shalt thou, a child of the light, be less wise than the children of darkness?

Behold the sun: it ariseth in the morning and declareth My glory. Would it not be a shameful thing, therefore, that it should find thee idle in thy bed, and so, by its diligence, should precede thee in My service?

O, My son, prevent the sun with the time of thy benediction. Before its rising the manna was to be gathered by My people: for when the sun had risen, it melted away. Even so tardy prayer hath scarcely any substance and efficacy.

Hasten, therefore, at the hour of rising, and collect thy thoughts.

3. Early in the morning

the wings of the dove are more free: then wilt thou more easily fly up to Me.

The morning eye is clearer: for when the eye is darkened by the sight of worldly things, it apprehendeth not what it seeth.

The morning ear is more correct: when the ear is dulled by earthly noise, it understandeth not what it heareth.

The morning heart is more pure, is more tractable: when the heart is covered with the foul dust of the earth, it savoureth of the same.

Give thy heart, then, to watch early in the morning for Me, Who made thee; and early in the morning pour forth thy prayers in the presence of My Majesty: and I will fill thee with the spirit of understanding, I will send out the words of My wisdom: in prayer thou shalt confess before Me, and I will guide thy counsel aright.

4. Moreover, that thou mayest be the more ready for Me in the morning, prepare thy soul, My son, the night before. What thou proposest to meditate upon in the morning, that read over before thou sleepest; so soon as thou wakest it will recur to thee; and so much the easier wilt thou give thy heart to Me, and offer the first-fruits of thy mind.

Arise diligently, and, like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so shall thy soul long to serve Me. Then, fervent in spirit, thou shalt fall down before Me; and I will say unto thee, Behold, it is I.

Only set thyself in My presence and thou shalt see, thou shalt abound, thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged.

Now thou shalt be confounded and blush at My holiness, and thine unrighteousness: now thou shalt humble thyself at My beauty, and at thine own deformity.

Now thou shalt be abased at My greatness, and at thine own misery; at My goodness, and at the thought of thine ingratitude: now thou shalt play the man by reason of thy trust in Me.

Now thou shalt cheerfully take up the sword against the enemies of thy soul: now thou shalt be silent in My love, and rejoice in Me with praise.

Behold, My son, how I am with them who meditate upon Me in the morning.

Draw near, therefore, early in the morning, unto Me, and thou shalt be enlightened.

5. But if thou art not able, by reason of urgent and unexpected business, to devote thyself to holy meditation, remember, My son, that at every hour I am with those that pray, and that I give food to them that fear Me.

Remain not fasting, therefore, the whole day: but, as soon as thou art able, hasten, as if faint from delay, to the feast of meditation.

Dearly beloved, is not the soul more than the body? More, verily, much more.

Be wise, therefore, and say: If, at the usual hour, I be not able to refresh my body, yet, afterwards, I omit not to take my necessary food.

If I be positively kept from a proper dinner, on account of business, I still take care to recruit my strength by several small refections.

Even so will I do for thee, O my soul. Day by day, in the morning, I will refresh thee: but if, in the morning, I be not able, afterwards I will take good care to make up the deficiency.

And if, indeed, at any time, leisure be altogether wanting for thy pious feast; at least, by frequent and ardent brief prayers of the heart, I will not neglect to recruit thee.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

OF GOD CALLING US.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, I am thy GOD, and all that is thine. I, Whose seat in the heavens, dwell with thee on the earth in My Temple: so that, whenever thou wilt, thou mayest find life in Me, and draw salvation from thy LORD. O, My son, I have not dealt so with any nation.

If thou wert living in the distant countries of the heathen, and it were told thee that there was a certain people with whom the True GOD thus deigned to dwell, so that at any hour each one

might freely draw nigh unto Him, and talk with Him face to face, thou wouldst exclaim, in truth, O, blessed is the people who have such a LORD for their GOD!

In an ecstasy of mind thou wouldest say: I, too, will go to this people, and I will behold this great sight.

O, how amiable are the dwellings of this GOD! My soul hath a desire and longing for His courts: I will arise, and will go unto Him.

Go forth, my soul, from thine own country, and from thine own kindred: come, and let us see this thing which is come to pass: come, and let us offer unto Him gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

2. My son, behold, I stand at thy door! Thou hast not to fly over mountains, nor to cross the sea, nor to leave thine own country: thou needest not to leave thine own kindred, that thou mayest be made a partaker of such great bliss.

The approach is open to thee: no guards stand in the way: always, and at any hour, all things are ready: My eyes regard, My ears are listening, My heart is open.

Come, thou mayest, through Me, come: I desire to see thee: for it is My delight to be with thee.

Come; I wait patiently for thee, that I may incline unto thee, and hear thy prayer. Come unto thy LORD, and pay Him thy vows.

Come unto the well of water springing up unto everlasting life: and there shall be given unto thee wine and milk, without money and without price.

Come unto Him that multiplieth the loaves in the wilderness; and thy soul shall be filled, as it were, with marrow and fatness.

Come, and I will fill thee with good things; the good measure of My grace, pressed down and shaken and running over, will I give into thy bosom.

3. O, My son! If thou wert only a man, I should say unto thee, Come, and worship. For it is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy GOD, and Him only shalt thou serve.

But thou art a priest, a man of the Temple, a man of the Sanctuary, a man of the Altar, a man of GOD: it is thy part to weep between the porch and the Altar.

Thy part it is in My anger to stand against Me: and

to appease Me: thy part it is to make intercession for the sins of all.

Thy part it is to offer violence unto Heaven, that the dew may fall down from above, and clouds may rain down upon My people the precious graces of My gifts: thy part it is to praise GOD, to bless the LORD.

O, son! O, priest! O, servant of the Supreme King! Surely thou wilt not neglect Him?

O, friend of thy SAVIOUR! Shall His intercourse have bitterness for thee, or His entertainment weariness?

O, disciple! Wilt thou fly from thy best of Masters?

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. O LORD! Wretched am I, if, when so many burning coals are heaped upon me, I grow cold towards Thee, and refuse to draw nigh!

Oh! Who hath ever heard anything like this? That me, who am not worthy to come under Thy roof, Thou shouldest suffer to come into Thy palace: nay, moreover, shouldest exhort, and even compel to come in.

I will do Thy will, O LORD. I will go and visit the place where Thou dwellest, my KING and my GOD.

O LORD! How can I refrain from such a duty, when I remember that all ran unto Thee whilst Thou wast conversing visibly with men;

When I think that all men came from every town of Galilee, of Judæa, and Jerusalem;

When I read that the multitude about Thee was so great that they were obliged to take off the tiling of the house-top, and through it let down the sick of the palsy before Thee?

Would that, LORD, every evening I might come with Mary Magdalene to see the sepulchre in which, very Man, and very GOD, Thou humbly and lovingly restedst.

There, prostrate, would I worship: confessing against myself my transgressions, praising Thy Name with a song, and magnifying Thee in praise.

In the place of Thy pasture, be Thou my Shepherd, O my GOD, and I shall lack nothing.

There will I learn the paths of Thy righteousness: there shall I be taught to fear no evil: there Thy rod

and Thy staff shall comfort me.

There shall I be made strong against all them that trouble me: there shall Thy loving-kindness surround me so as to follow me all the days of my life, until I dwell in Thy heavenly house for ever.

CHAPTER XL.

OF SELF-EXAMINATION AT EVENTIDE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Judge thyself, My son, that thou be not judged.

At eventide examine thy ways. Thou oughtest to be prepared: for at an hour that thou thinkest not, I, the Son of Man, will come.

Perhaps this very night I shall require thy soul of thee: see if the account of thy stewardship be ready.

If thou live till to-morrow, thou wilt have to stand before My Altar: see if thou be entirely clean.

Take, then, thy soul into thine hands. Consider, carefully, in what state it is: what it hath done in thought, in wish, in deed: what against Me, what against thy neighbour, what against thyself.

Hath it been defiled with the world's dust? Shake off that dust, by sorrow, by a fresh resolve.

Alas! if so be—which be far from thee—it hath gone down into the deep by reason of any very grievous sin.

Then, O son, mourn, and witness against thyself: determine upon a ready confession and amendment, so that the sun go not down upon thy transgression, and I take not vengeance in the mid darkness.

Oh! how many are prevented by a sudden death: how many have gone in good health to their beds, and the same night have gone down into hell; because they fell asleep in very grievous sin without repentance.

Oh! if thou be not afraid thus to lie down in a state in which thou wouldest not dare to die;

Who knoweth whether that sleep, which thou tak-

est in this deadly state, may not be even to thee the beginning of eternal death?

2. I increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with the FATHER and with men.

Thou also, O, My son, oughtest, day by day, to increase: if thou dost not increase, thou decreasest: and how shalt thou increase, if thou watch not thy short-comings, if thou observe them not, if thou amend them not?

At eventide, therefore, return into thy heart, and carefully examine thyself.

Consider whence thou comest, whither thou goest, how thou livest, what thou doest, what thou allowest: how much daily thou increasest or decreasest: with what thoughts thou art mostly occupied, with what affections thou art touched, with what temptations from the evil one thou art most sharply attacked.

This did My Saints frequently, as long as they abode on the earth: and therefore did they increase so much in righteousness.

Seeking for and marking daily their short-comings, so, day by day, did they amend the same, and make them less.

The more frequently did they fall through frailty, the more readily did they rise again: the more bravely did they prepare themselves for the battle, the more earnestly did they seek My help.

So were they, already righteous, made more righteous still: and, already holy, made more holy still: and so were their slight faults to them rather incitements to righteousness, than hindrances of their perfection.

Do thou likewise, My son: whilst all is silent, and thy mind is free from the trouble of business, then look into thy soul.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. O LORD, my faults are not hid from Thee: Thou hast put my feet also into the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths, and considerest my footsteps.

Send out Thy light and Thy truth: I will know myself as I am known of Thee: and knowing myself, I will daily rebuke myself and correct myself.

So far unspotted in the way, as my weakness alloweth, may I become perfect, even as my FATHER which is in heaven is perfect.

CHAPTER XLI.

OF DOING OUR COMMON ACTIONS WELL.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I, My son, did all things well. And if thou wilt follow holiness, without which no man shall see Me, thou oughtest especially to care for this—namely, that thou mayest perform all thy works carefully and holily.

Behold, thy whole life is nothing more than a series of actions recurring day by day.

If, therefore, those actions be done by thee with due perfection, without doubt thy whole life, also, will be holy and perfect.

O, son! how great fervour of emulation ought this thought to light up in thee!

"So many and so many actions in a day, so many in a month, so many in a year, am I bound to do.

"If I fulfil each one properly, so many acts of virtue shall I elicit, so many degrees of glory shall I deserve.

"If I do them thoughtlessly, and only carelessly, my time, my work, and innumerable degrees of glory shall I lose; yea, and lose them irreparably.

"Thou hastenest on, O death! And when thou shalt have come, how shall I rejoice, if I have done all things well! How shall I groan, if I have done them ill!"

2. Look, My son, at men who are either extremely parsimonious, or who are very desirous of wealth: consider how careful they are that nothing be lost, that nothing perish: but that all things, even the most minute, even the most worthless, may be employed usefully.

Behold how diligently others spend their time, so that not one single particle of it may fruitlessly pass away without some gain.

Imitate them, My son, and from the proudest ones of the world learn thou the true wisdom of the sons of GOD.

Learn so to perform every, the most trifling and even the very meanest, action of thy life, that it may not go for nothing.

Learn so to spend every minute of thy time that it may bring thee fruit unto life eternal.

Observe, My son, the parsimonious man doth not say, This is trifling, it may be despised.

But, on the contrary, however trifling and despicable this may seem, let it be spent in such a way, and it will be useful.

Thus do thou also: and say not, This work is nothing: I care but little how it be done.

Say, on the contrary, This, indeed, seemeth but of little moment. Nevertheless, let this vile grain of mustard-seed be carefully sown in our field, and it will grow up and become a tree: and I hereafter shall eat of its fruits.

Observe still further, My son. The man who is desirous of wealth saith not, A few minutes are of no consequence: let us rest a little, let us enjoy ourselves for a moment.

But, on the contrary, he saith, Of minutes an hour is made up. Well done! my hand: work quickly, and after the hour will come the profit.

Thus thou, also, My son, oughtest so to work, that even the very smallest moment of thy life, by some action well done, may become fruitful unto thee.

Be of good cheer, dearly beloved: those things which in themselves are most trifling, love maketh worthy of notice; those which seem the very smallest, a good intention maketh most precious.

Be of good cheer, do well: to do great things without love, is worthless and vain; but to perform small things perfectly, with Me is most acceptable.

3. What will be done at the judgment, My son? This, at least, thou knowest: then will I give to every man according to his works.

Have a care, therefore, that all thy works be good and right.

So, most assuredly, wilt thou keep thyself safe from My correction and wrath, and be very sure of My praise and reward.

It must be, dearly beloved, that thou go on with thy accustomed works. Whether thou doest them ill or well, still thou doest them.

For instance, thou prayest, thou studiest, thou sayest the service, thou cele-

bratest the Holy Eucharist, thou ministerest the rites of the Church.

But if thou doest all these badly or negligently, thou art profited nothing; nay, rather, thou runnest the risk of damnation: and yet, in spite of all, thou still hast the trouble of doing them.

Do not, My son, thus lose what thou doest. Have a good care that thy labours be not in vain.

In a fit and holy way perform all thy works: thou wilt have no greater trouble; nay, rather, thou wilt the more easily bear the necessary trouble of these actions, and, by its means, thou wilt at last earn thy crown.

If, therefore, in thy acts thou perceive thyself to be slothful and negligent, arouse thyself, and say, Art thou mad, O my soul! Thou bearest a heavy yoke, and thou makest no progress; nay, rather, thou art losing way.

Be of good cheer, be of good cheer: act earnestly, act rightly: and thou wilt bear thy yoke the easier, and thou wilt labour profitably to thyself.

4. But thou wilt say, My son, How shall this thing be? How can I do all things well?

Hearken, My son: behold, I will teach thy hands to fight this fight.

Above all things, thou oughtest to keep thyself from every appearance of evil. Therefore, thou mayest do nothing except what thou knowest to be good, or, at least, lawful.

But, that thou mayest do this thing, whether good or lawful, well, thou must observe the following rules:

In every work have a pure intention, and order all things to the greater glory of thy GOD.

Shake off sloth: and, with all earnestness and alacrity, perform the matter as if thou hadst this thing alone to do.

When once thou hast begun, go on steadily: and if the matter last, constantly cheer and urge thyself on.

Observe a regular order: so that, as far as possible, everything may be done at the prescribed time, neither before nor after.

In a word, dearly beloved, look to JESUS in everything, in all things imitate JESUS.

Say, with [S.] Vincent, What now, and how, would CHRIST do? How would

He speak? How would He proceed?

What doth He look for from me? What doth He will? O, good Master! I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go.

By doing this, indeed, My son, thou wilt lay up for thyself by thy actions, not wood, hay, stubble, to be burned in the flames; but gold, silver, precious stones, to be offered on the Altar of the heavens to Him that sitteth upon the Throne.

CHAPTER XLII.

OF THE CAREFUL EMPLOYMENT OF TIME.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Dearly beloved; now thou hast the light, now is the accepted time, to-day is the day of salvation: but a little while, and the night cometh, when thou wilt be able to work no more: shortly, the darkness shall overtake thee, and thou shalt be judged.

Oh! if thou wouldst consider, seriously, how precious a thing time is, how soon it passeth away, and how thou wilt grieve if, in the hour of death, thou perceivest that it hath been uselessly spent by thee; assuredly, thou wouldst busy thyself, with all diligence, to use this most precious talent.

2. Verily, beloved, the time present is a treasure: those who use it well are made partakers of the friendship of God: and thou also mayest, if thou wilt, by means of ever so short and trifling a moment of time which is granted thee, gain an eternal weight of glory in the heavens above.

The Apostles and the holy priests attained their inheritance in heaven in no way except by the good use of their time. And the better they spent it, the brighter was the crown they obtained.

Even so wicked priests have become deserving of the grievous lot of eternal damnation in no way except through the loss or the abuse of their time.

3. Employ, therefore, thy time most carefully, diligently taking care that no

particle of so great a good pass thee by, since to the Supreme Judge thou shalt give an account of it, even to the uttermost farthing.

Make haste to employ it, since it is short, and quickly passeth away. If thou delay, even now thou art losing it, and that which thou shalt lose by thy delays will be no more.

Spend it carefully, remembering that the labour passeth by, but the reward remaineth, and, verily, endureth for ever.

Behold the labours of the Apostles; behold the torments of the Martyrs; behold the strivings and the pains of all the Saints;—battles they were, great, indeed, but of short duration: but their triumph is eternal, their crown perpetual, their felicity interminable, their joy without end, their rest for ever and ever.

Thus to pray, to study, to preach, to guide souls, to seek the lost and the wandering sheep, to chastise the body, to watch, to labour, and in other ways holily to spend thy time, will be, indeed, an affliction of thy flesh, but it will be momentary, it will be short, since with time it will pass by;

And when the time shall have passed, then shall there remain to thee nothing of the pain; but the good which thou shalt have done shall follow thee.

4. Consider what must be the joy of the priest who hath employed his time well when he cometh to his end and saith: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give me at that day.

But what must be the desolation of the wicked servant, the slothful priest, who hath lost his time, when close upon death he perceiveth that now shortly he must give an account of that talent to the Supreme Judge, the austere Master.

Oh! how gladly would he give all that he hath to obtain one minute only! Oh, how earnestly doth he ask for delay! But in vain: the harvest is past: summer is ended.

But how doth he rage, how doth he gnash with his teeth and consume away, when, being judged and cast into outer darkness, he thinketh over the many years in which he might have saved alive his own

soul and the souls of them who were committed to him.

The many moments of lost time in which he might by repentance have appeased God, and by continual prayer have obtained pardon, and by good works have made his election sure.

5. Be careful, therefore, and look to thyself, dearly beloved, lest, in like manner, it befall thee.

May be, hitherto the days of thy pilgrimage have been evil, or, at least, have not been fruitful like the days of thy forefathers, the Apostles, and My Saints, who spent the whole of their time profitably.

Perhaps already thou hast lost many years: they, indeed, can return no more to be well spent: yet they may be redeemed.

And if thou sincerely wish it, if from henceforth thou use thy time diligently and wisely, thou mayest still gain the whole reward of the good labourers.

For instance: up to the sixth or ninth, or even to the eleventh hour, thou hast stood idle almost all the day. But go quickly, make haste to go into My vineyard of the time present, labour as a good labourer, and at the end of the day thou shalt receive a penny, not less than those who have borne the whole burden and heat of the day.

Believe this: knowing that I am good, and that it is lawful for Me to do as I will. And if any evil eye shall envy thee, I, I Myself will rebuke him.

6. Nevertheless, My son, it is right that thou, on thy part, shouldest labour the more diligently, the longer thou hast remained in that pernicious idleness.

Look upon thyself, labouring amongst the labourers, as one who striveth amongst those who strive in the contest, and as if one only of those who strive should receive the prize—so run that thou mayest obtain.

Behold how the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance: but know that, if thou despise His long-suffering, wasting thy time to the last in vain and empty cares, feastings, delights, ease, conversation, reading—then thou treasurest up His wrath for thyself: and He at last—no longer sparing—will cry out: Cut down, cut down the unfruitful tree; why cumbereth it the ground?

CHAPTER XLIII.

OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, I fill the heavens and the earth: Mine Eyes behold the whole earth.

I observe the ways of men, and, without ceasing, I consider their footsteps: yea, moreover, I search out their hearts and their reins, and no thought is hid from Me.

Go, My son, whithersoever thou wilt, thou shalt not depart from My Spirit, nor go from My presence.

If thou climb up into heaven, I am there: if thou go down into hell, I am there also.

If thou fly to the uttermost parts of the sea; even there My Hand shall lead thee, and My right Hand shall hold thee.

If thou shalt hide thyself in the thickest darkness, and shalt wish to cover thyself in the darkest night; then that dark night shall be as clear as the day in My sight; and thy darkness to Me shall be as the light.

Fly, My son, whithersoever thou wilt: in Me thou shalt always live, in Me shalt thou move, in Me shalt thou have thy being.

2. With this thought constantly arm thyself, My son; and thou shalt decline from evil and do good.

In the presence of a human judge who can kill the body, the thief stealeth not.

In the presence of his father, the wicked son acteth not wickedly.

In the presence of his lord, the slothful servant is not idle.

Thou thyself, My son, in the presence of thine ecclesiastical superior, wouldst not dare to do that which is evil.

O beloved, if the presence of a superior, nay, even the sight of any witness whatever, is sufficient to restrain the souls of the wicked, what a curb to thee will be the recollection of the presence of God, the great and Almighty Judge!

Yea, I say, of that terrible Judge Who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

But if, indeed, thou carest not for such a thought

as this, and shalt be unmindful of GOD, Who beholdeth all things and judgeth all things—what then?

The wall being whited without, the outside of the cup being cleansed, thou wilt be at ease.

That is to say: it will content thee, if in thy life nothing can be distinctly observed which can darken thy fame, or imprint on thee a sign of a bad rule of action.

If, therefore, in public and in the sight of men thou shalt be sober, chaste, temperate, merciful, then, at the appointed time, thou wilt go to thy ecclesiastical duties, and wilt busy thyself with the proper offices.

But in secret, lightly regarding the clerical rule, thou wilt give thyself up to sensuality, to pleasure, to covetousness.

But in thy service, honouring Me with thy lips, thou wilt dishonour Me with thy heart: when thou receivest penitents, thou wilt not care for their salvation; thou wilt preach, but thou wilt not be anxious about the fruit.

For, inasmuch as men see nothing but the face, thou wilt think it enough that thou always showest to them a pious countenance.

Oh! ruinous, most shameful hypocrisy, which the forgetfulness of the presence of GOD encourageth, but which the remembrance thereof driveth away and destroyeth.

3. In all that thou doest, therefore, My son, be mindful of GOD: and thou wilt serve Him with a right heart, and thou wilt keep thy feet from every evil way.

Remember Him early in the morning: and so, when thou openest thine eyes to the light, thou wilt keep thy soul from perverse thoughts, and thou wilt overcome the immoderate drowsiness of the body.

Remember Him when thou goest to thy prayers: and thou wilt refrain from wanderings of the mind and heart.

Remember Him when thou goest to thy work: and, working for thy master, thou shalt have a reward with the LORD.

Remember Him in thy holy office: and thou wilt not dare to seek thine own things; but thou wilt promote the glory of GOD, and the salvation of souls.

Remember Him at thy

meals: and thou wilt not exceed the limits of sobriety.

Remember Him in the recreation of thy mind: and thou wilt avoid the choice of undisciplined things.

Remember Him in thy conversation: and thou wilt set a holy watch upon thy mouth, and wilt hedge up thine ears with thorns.

Remember Him in thy journeying and in thy walking: and thou wilt faithfully keep the covenant which thou madest with thine eyes at thy baptism and ordination.

Remember Him in temptation: and thou shalt be delivered from evil.

My son, I beseech thee, keep this short and perfect word: "think thou of Me, and I will think of thee."

With the desolation of abomination are souls destroyed: because there are none who, in their heart, think of the presence of God.

Hold fast this short but most useful counsel: ever remember the presence of thy God, and thou wilt not sin: verily, I say unto thee, Remember.

4. But hearken again, My son, and with this profitable thought I will guide thee in a way more excellent still.

Verily, if thou shalt be mindful of thy God, not only wilt thou carefully decline from evil, but thou wilt also most earnestly do good.

Incline thine ear, My son, and hearken unto this parable: the King of Heaven is like unto a man that is the best of kings, who had a servant dearly beloved by him.

Now this King had commanded that every work and deed of that servant should be carefully noted: so that whatever that servant should do in the service of the King should be rewarded with the very fullest reward.

But that servant being advised of this command of his King, and always stimulated by this thought, "The King, assuredly, will know; the King will most fully reward;" with what alacrity, thinkest thou, and with what zeal will he not do all that he can for that most generous King.

Here, perhaps, thou wilt say, My son, "Oh that I were that servant! Assuredly, whatever my hand found to do, I would do it with all my might."

Ah, My son! Am not I, of all Kings, the most powerful, the most rich, and the most liberal?

Art not thou My servant—nay, My minister?

All that thou doest for Me, do not I see it through Myself?

Have not I promised thee, for every work—even for the smallest—the most abundant reward, and such as no king of this world can give?

Rejoice, therefore, and be exceeding glad, at every good work, saying, "Be of good cheer, my soul! Do good, do it fervently, do it gladly: the LORD seeth, the LORD will repay."

Oh! powerful inducement, My son. Oh! how hard and strong-hearted must he be, who, by this thought of GOD beholding him, is not spurred on to the practice of all virtues!

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O good GOD! O most loving FATHER! Who desirest to gather us, Thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.

How ungrateful should I be, if I desire not, if I refuse to take refuge under the wings of Thy presence! Far be it, far be it from me!

Behold, here I am, LORD: for Thou hast called me. Oh! how good is it to rest under Thy shadow.

There, from henceforth, most loving FATHER, shall be my tabernacle: so that I may ever be with Thee, even as Thou art ever with me. There will I live, there sleep, there repose.

And thus, O my GOD, the continual recollection of Thy presence shall be to me light in darkness, safety in danger, help in temptation, strength in terror, trust in anxiety.

The Voice of the Beloved.

6. Thou hast chosen the good part for thyself, My son. But, except thou watch, the memory of My presence will be easily taken away from thee.

Thou walkest amongst created and temporal things. And these easily take a man by means of his senses: they ensnare him, and turn him away from things above.

And yet there are spiritual men who not only are not drawn away from Me by the sight and use of earthly things, but, rather, are powerfully drawn up to

Me by means of created things.

They, by the things that are made, understand and meditate upon My invisible things.

They in the heavens, in the earth, in all things, see My glory, power, wisdom, providence, justice, mercy, goodness.

Thou also, My son, learn from the vanity of the creature to ascend to the truth of the Creator.

If thou seest anything fair, exclaim: If what He hath made be so great, how great must He be Who made it!

If anything good or bad happen unto thee, say: The LORD hath done this, for without Him is there nothing done. Blessed be the Name of the LORD.

By doing thus, My son, though a pilgrim on the earth away from Me, yet shalt thou see Me now through a glass darkly: and henceforth, when thou diest, thou shalt go into bliss, and see Me face to face.

CHAPTER XLIV.

OF HAVING TRUST IN GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, of My mercy there is no limit: of My goodness there is an infinite treasure.

It is I Who deliver them that trust in Me: no man hath trusted in Me and been confounded.

Hope, therefore, and trust in Me: and thou shalt never be confounded.

The Voice of the Disciple.

2. O LORD, my strength! O GOD, my refuge! Oh! how sweet is Thy Voice!

Blessed be Thou, O good FATHER, for Thou wilt be my helper in the troubles which have overwhelmed me.

Verily, O LORD, my soul was vexed within me, and my spirit was troubled.

I thought over the years that are gone: I saw that they were weighed down with many transgressions, and I said: What shall I

do, and whither shall I go, for God is my Judge?

The righteous shall scarcely be saved. What, then, will become of me, who have been, above measure, a grievous sinner?

I looked into my debts to Thee, O Thou terrible God; and when I saw how few were my tears, how small the satisfaction of my repentance, I said: Behold, I shall be weighed in the balance, and shall be found wanting.

I noticed the perils of this world, the continual temptations of the devil, the constant rebellions of the flesh, and I said: Ah me! I am frail! I am weak! How shall I go through unhurt! How shall I escape so many snares?

I looked into the duties and charges of the priesthood, and I cried out: Ah me! wretched man, sinner, blind, unserviceable! How shall I render unto God what I owe Him in this most holy state?

I thought upon the freeness of Thy grace and of Thy helps, and with weeping and mourning I exclaimed: How can I perform what my God hath enjoined me?

Perhaps, some time, I shall be left to myself, and I shall fall: perhaps God will turn away His face from me, and I shall perish in my own weakness.

Remembering these things in my heart, I confess, O Lord, that, except Thou hadst comforted me, I had well-nigh despaired.

The Voice of the Beloved.

3. Blessed is the man who feareth the Lord. Blessed art thou, My son, for I Myself have inspired thee with that holy fear, which is the beginning of wisdom. Fear, therefore, fear: but trust.

Fear: the more thou fearest, the more ready shall I be to make haste to help thee.

Trust: the more thou trustest, the greater shall be My special care for thee.

All things are possible to Me, My son: there is none that can resist My will, if I have determined to save thee.

And if thou doest differently from thy natural inclination, that thou mayest please Me, then thou mayest confidently hope for salvation from Me: and know and believe that thou shalt

receive it, and it shall be accomplished for thee.

4. Verily, My son, how great soever thy transgressions be, if thou grievest for them, and keepest thyself from them, confidently hope for pardon: knowing that I, the LORD, have sworn, saying:

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live—he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him.

How great soever may be the debts which, through thy transgressions, thou hast incurred to Me, if, with all thy might thou strivest to pay them, though thou canst not do so worthily, yet confidently hope for a full remission:

Knowing that, to the woman who was a sinner, who mourned, I said, without delay: Thy sins are forgiven thee.

Knowing that, to the thief who besought Me, I instantly replied: To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise.

O, My son! remember the father of that prodigal son, of whom I have told thee before.

Dearly beloved, to the son, weeping and returning, did not the loving father directly grant perfect forgiveness? Nay, further, did he not grant undoubted proofs of his most abundant love?

What then, My son, am not I a still better Father? Yea, verily, a better one—yea, infinitely better.

Thou who, through thy blindness, canst not conceive of the immensity of My mercy! How canst thou dare to doubt concerning My goodness?

Oh! If thou shouldst despair, I will say to thee; Thou ungrateful son! wicked son! Thou doest injustice to thy FATHER.

Thou distrustest! Dost thou fear, then, lest I either be not so powerful, or so good, as to be able and willing to forgive thee?

Cease from lightly esteeming My goodness and power. Have faith, and thy trespasses shall be forgiven thee.

5. How vast soever may be the perils by which thou art surrounded: howsoever multiplied may be the snares and the darts of the devil: howsoever urgent

may be the lust of thy flesh upon thee:

If thou avoid the occasions [of sinning]; if thou use those remedies which are recommended to thee; then confidently expect victory:

Knowing that I have given My angels charge, that him who trusteth in Me they should keep in all his ways, and bear him in their hands, lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone:

Believing that I, as I have promised, will set at liberty, will protect him that trusteth in Me, will hear him when he crieth, when in tribulation will save and deliver him.

Hope, have faith, My son: and thou shalt be safe under the shadow of My wings—thou shalt be covered with the shield of My might.

Thou shalt see a thousand fall beside thee, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but the evil spirit shall not come nigh thee.

Hope, have faith, My son: and thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet.

6. Though formidable, indeed, be the burden of the priesthood, and arduous its duties—and though thou be never so weak and feeble—yet, My son, be thou of good cheer.

Provided only, that thy heart be prepared for all things: provided only, that thou labourest as a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST: then act confidently, and fear not:

Knowing this: that they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.

Believing that, though the direction of souls be the very greatest of all sciences, yet, to a priest who is in earnest—to one faithfully devoted to piety and study—My grace will be sufficient, so that he may fulfil his ministry duly and adequately.

7. And although this grace be My own free gift, yet, if only thou seek for it piously and earnestly, do not with weak faith question whether thou shalt receive it under this or that circumstance—whether thy GOD will succour thee in every necessity.

For thou shouldest remember that I, Who have taught thee to flee from evil and do good, am faithful.

I never command impossible things: but when I command, I exhort thee both to do what thou art able to do; and when I exhort thee to do what thou art not able to do, I then give thee help, that thou mayest be able.

Believe that, as I have promised, when thou askest, it shall be given, and when thou knockest, it shall be opened.

Heaven and earth shall pass away, My son; but this word shall not pass away. Be not thou, therefore, afraid.

8. O, My son! Have not I given up My own soul for the very wicked themselves?

When thou wast yet a sinner, did not I die for thee?

When thou wast yet an enemy, wast thou not reconciled to My FATHER by My death.

Could I in a more excellent way have shown My love to thee?

How, therefore, now that thou art justified by My Blood, canst thou doubt that thou shalt be kept safe by Me from the wrath to come; that thou shalt receive remission of thy sins?

How canst thou, who art good and faithful, when thou art groaning in tribulation, in dangers, in anxieties, in necessities, and when calling upon Me, fear lest I should refuse to hear thee—should deny thee help?

Surely, My son, thou knowest that in such a case thy own mother would not desert thee. How much less will I leave thee!

Verily, verily, even though she should then forget thee, yet will not I forget thee.

Be of good cheer, dearly beloved, who art borne by Me from the belly, which art carried from the womb, be of good cheer: even to thine old age I am He: and even to hoar hairs I will carry thee.

I have made, and I will bear: even I will carry, and will deliver thee.

CHAPTER XLV.

OF STUDY AND READING.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, attend to reading and study. As a bird is made for flying, as man is born to trouble, so thou, who art a priest, art devoted to knowledge and piety.

Dost thou, then, think thyself safe, if, when the daily service is over, and mental prayer done, and the Holy Communion celebrated, thou spendest the rest of thy time in idleness, in wandering about, in vain pursuits?

Not so, My son, not so: let thy lips keep knowledge: if thou reject knowledge, I will reject thee.

I have given thee time, not that thou shouldest lose it, but that thou shouldest restore it to Me at the Judgment with usury. Verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

2. Hearken then, My son, and incline thine ear: forget, also, thine own people and thy father's house.

Get learning, even like one that plougheth and soweth; draw nigh unto it, and heap up for thyself the good fruits thereof.

They will require a law from thy mouth: study, therefore, My Law regularly, and all Scripture profitable for instruction: learn and digest My words.

It is thy duty to argue with those who contradict the truth: therefore, learn the Catholic verities, and the vindication of them.

Thou art bound to be diligent in the ministry of the word, to be instant in exhortation: therefore, inquire of the Fathers: study the works of good theologians, and make thyself familiar with their sayings.

It is thy duty to forgive sins, or to retain them: to cure the sickness of the mind: seek for wisdom, therefore, from the wise, and learning from them that understand, to whom I have revealed the deep and hidden things.

Study: so that from Me,

and not from thyself, thou mayest preach unto My sheep.

Study: so that when the wolf shall come, and shall wish to catch and to scatter the sheep, thou mayest not be a dumb dog that cannot bark.

Study: so that, offering to lead the blind, thou mayest not be blind thyself, and thus both fall into the ditch.

Study: so that thou mayest be perfectly skilled in ritual and the technical knowledge of thine office.

Study: what hast thou to do with trifles? Thou hast received a ministry to be devoted to CHRIST'S Altar, and not to man.

See, then, that what time thou art free from the Church's services thou spendest in reading.

3. Knowledge gotten by pious reading and sacred study is an infinite treasure; those who have availed themselves of it have become partakers of the friendship of GOD.

Behold Paul, behold Ambrose, behold Thomas, Bede, and many others: how unweariedly did they devote themselves to study and to reading.

O priest, if thou remain without books, without study, and without reading, verily, thou art like a soldier without arms, like a horse without reins, a ship without oars, a writer without a pen, a bird without wings, a blind man without a guide.

4. Seek, also, for thine own self, My son, the science of the Saints—the knowledge of salvation: seek that perfection so necessary for thy state: that thou wilt find in pious and daily reading.

There shall thy soul be fed: there, day by day, by fresh inducements, shall it be excited to every good work.

Do not read many things, hurriedly; but a few things, with a collected mind.

When thou hast done reading, stow away the marrow of thy reading in thy heart, so that it may be recalled and pondered; and when pondered, it may correct what is bad in thee, and adorn the more what is fair.

5. Dost thou wish, My son, dost thou wish to make great advances? Dost thou wish to be incited to virtue? Dost thou wish to have some powerful incentive to piety? Then, read constantly the lives of thy

Fathers, the holy men of old.

Looking on their examples and the end of their conversation, thou wilt imitate their faith. Oh how much are examples worth! Far more, in good truth, than precepts.

Thou wilt wonder and say: They were men, such as I am; frail, like me; prone to evil, like me; and yet, lo! how they were reckoned amongst the sons of GOD, and their lot is amongst the Saints. Cannot I do what these and others did?

Come, my soul, and let us walk with them in the ways of the LORD; and let us go up with them unto the house of the GOD of Jacob.

The lives of the Saints, thus considered, have converted innumerable persons and led them up to heaven.

6. Read, my son; reading will teach thee when ignorant, will rebuke thee when idle, will arouse thee when slothful, will goad thee on when thou sleepest:

Will correct thee when wandering, will raise thee when stumbling, will terrify thee when laughing, will console thee when mourning, will praise thee when thou art humble, will blame thee when thou art proud:

Will comfort thee when weak, will repress thee when presumptuous, will calm thee when disturbed, will make thee glad when thou art sorrowful, will condemn thee when perverse, will justify thee when thou art righteous.

7. Enter into thy closet, and shut out the world's noise: love such retirement, and employ thyself in silence and quiet, in reading and study.

Believe Me, continued retirement will become sweeter and sweeter to thee: and if thou observe and keep it well, in a short time it will become unto thee a beloved friend, and a most agreeable solace.

O son! No doubt there is need of occasional recreation and of distraction. But to whom? Surely not to an idle man, but to one who is studious.

Keep thyself, therefore, from a wish for sensual ease, which will draw thee away to vain idling.

Give no recreation to thy mind, except thou hast deserved it first by mental application; otherwise, when the hour shall have passed by, thou wilt bring back

nothing but heaviness of conscience and distraction of heart.

For a glad beginning oftentimes produces a sad end: and a glad night oftentimes maketh a sad morning.

CHAPTER XLVI.

OF THE READING OF HOLY SCRIPTURE.

The Voice of the Master.

1. Dost thou wish, My son, to learn wisdom and knowledge? Dost thou wish to get learning, justice, judgment, and equity? Wouldest thou acquire subtlety and understanding?

Wouldest thou become wiser and wiser? Dost thou wish, being of understanding mind, to hold the reins, and to be more understanding than thine elders?

Incline thine heart to know the Scriptures: search for them more than for treasures: seek them beyond money.

Soon thou wilt abound, and thou wilt perceive that the knowledge of Scripture is better than trading in silver and fine gold: that it is more precious than all wealth, and that all things which can be wished for cannot be compared with it.

O son! Listen, then, to its words, and incline thine ear to its eloquence: let it not depart from thine eyes.

Say to the Holy Scripture: Thou art my sister. Call it thy beloved one.

2. I am thy FATHER, and thou art My son. O son, if thou art a good son, if I am to thee a beloved Father, surely thou oughtest to seek My company, and to be solicitous for My conversation.

Come, then, aside to the Holy Scriptures; there do I speak, My son, there do I hold converse with men;

Not in that terrible way in which, on Mount Sinai, I gave My Commandments to the Jews: but in that most gentle manner in which, through My SON, I embraced the little children.

Do thou, therefore, as if

thou wert one of those little ones, hasten unto Me: though thou see not My face, yet shalt thou hear My counsels.

3. I am thy LORD, and thou art My servant; in My Holy Scriptures have I written the precepts which I have given thee.

And I commanded thee that thou meditate upon them, when thou sittest in thine house, when thou walkest in thy way, when thou sleepest, and when thou risest up.

Keep the commandments, My son: read what is written, since it was written for thy learning.

4. I am the King of all the earth, thou art My servant, selected for this very purpose, that the words, which I have given unto thee in the Holy Scriptures, thou shouldest make known unto men: that the Commandments which I have delivered thou shouldest teach them to observe: that, according to My laws, thou shouldest judge them.

Therefore, My son, it is thy inheritance to know My Scriptures. That is the good thing of thy mouth: that is the gold and silver of thy condition.

5. Read it, My son, and thou wilt not go wrong: and thou wilt keep thy feet from every evil way; for this will make thee remember thy latter end.

Read it, and thou wilt run in the way of My Commandments: for it will be a lantern unto thy feet, and a light unto thy paths.

Read it, and thy soul shall be alway in thine hand; for thou wilt not forget My Law.

Read it, and it shall be well with thee; for My testimonies are the very joy of thy heart.

Read it, and it will incline thee to fulfil thy ministry with all piety, by reason of the eternal reward which it will promise thee.

Read it, and in thy sermons thy words shall be sweeter than honey: thy voice, uttering My words, mighty in operation and a glorious voice, shall break the cedar trees of iniquity, shall shake the wilderness, and cause the souls of the wicked to quake.

But the souls of the faithful it shall make ready, and lead on to greater perfection.

Read the Scripture, and in thy judgments thou wilt not depart from My judg-

ments: for thou wilt have My Law ever before thine eyes.

6. But if thou devote not thyself to the study of the Holy Scripture, My son, how miserable, how poor and blind wilt thou be?

Miserable, in truth, because that, whereas by thy holy ministry thou art bound to wage war against principalities and powers — against the rulers of the darkness of this world — against spiritual wickedness in high places—thou wilt not have the armour of GOD wherewith to wrestle against them:

Neither thy loins girt about with My truth; nor the breastplate of righteousness; nor thy feet shod: nor the shield of faith, wherewith to quench the darts of the wicked; nor the helmet of salvation; nor the sword of the Spirit.

And moreover, thou wilt be poor, because that, whereas thou art bound to break bread for others, not even for thyself wilt thou have the bread that is needful.

And at last thou wilt continue blind, because that My Scripture is the light of men; and without it, every priest abideth in darkness.

Both when he preacheth, either he only beateth the air, or he speaketh fables, or he bringeth out the words of human wisdom, and profiteth nothing for salvation:

And when he judgeth, he judgeth without judgment, without equity: blind, he leadeth the blind, and, with him, he falleth into the ditch.

The Voice of the Disciple.

7. I know, O LORD, that, if Thy Law be not my meditation, I shall perish in my lowliness.

I know that, without constant reading of it, I can be neither pious, nor wise, nor sufficiently learned.

Therefore will I search Thy wonderful testimonies: I will search them daily, I will search them constantly.

Daily will I draw near to this refreshment of my mind, that in it I may feed upon Thy words.

There will I seek the truth, and not eloquence: usefulness, and not overnice subtlety.

I will read religiously, I will read humbly, I will read with simplicity, I will read with faith.

Grant me, O LORD, grant me understanding, that I

may understand Thy Word: lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me, and teach me Thy judgments.

I know that Thy Book speaketh well: but if Thou keep silence, it neither enlighteneth the understanding, nor inflameth the heart.

CHAPTER XLVII.

OF BAD BOOKS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, take not thy part with the unbelievers. For what part hath that righteousness to which thou art bound with the iniquity which floweth from the books of the wicked?

What companionship hath that light with which thou hast been enlightened, and with which thou art bound to enlighten others, with the darkness of false philosophers?

What concord hath My servant with the angels of Belial? What lot hath My faithful priest with infidel writers?

What agreement can that presbyter, who daily standeth in the temple of his God, have with those foulest of idols, which are praised and worshipped in unholy books?

Be thou separate, therefore, My son, be thou separate: I, thy Lord, say unto thee, Be thou separate from bad books, and touch not the unclean thing.

2. Remember, My son, how that the serpent is more subtle than any beast of the field: he feareth not to draw near unto My own priests, even as he of old time drew near unto Eve.

He cometh that he may deceive them as he deceived her, and make them to transgress: nay, moreover, if possible, that he may draw them into impiety and unbelief.

Why, saith he, hath God commanded you that ye should not eat of every tree? Why should ye not read out of every book?

And if, perchance, they shall answer: God hath commanded us not to touch bad books, lest we die:

Then forthwith the adversary rejoins, "Ye shall not surely die: but your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

"Ye know the doctrines, ye hold the faith: ye have been filled with reason, with judgment, with prudence: ye know how to refuse the evil and to choose the good.

"Read, then: it is useful for you to have knowledge of impieties and of the bad things which it is your duty to refute.

"Read: some perverse things, indeed, the books of the wicked do set forth: still it is done elegantly and eloquently: and they will teach you many things which ye know not.

"Ye will reject the false dogmas: the useful eloquence, and those things which are worth knowing, ye will retain."

And thus it cometh to pass, that some, induced by curiosity and pride, rashly open those books, contrary to the command of GOD and of the Church.

And when they see that they are pleasant to the eyes and agreeable to look upon, they will eat of their fruits.

3. And what then? Alas! The matter of those books, which spreadeth like an ulcer, will, ere long, infuse its poison into the hearts of the readers.

Presently the tales of the wicked please them more than the undefiled Law of GOD.

Then, their wicked dogmas they detest not so much as formerly.

Then, they are seduced, and begin to waver in the faith.

Then, they do not, as before, bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST: but they suffer their own blind reason to have the rule over their faith.

Then, at last, faith perisheth, and is taken away out of their heart.

Oh! how many, My son, how many priests, once good and firm, have thus fallen!

Because, trusting vainly in their own bow and sword, they have rashly drawn near to the books of the enemies of GOD.

4. Unto thee, therefore, O dearly beloved, I say: Hold the books of the malignant in the greatest hatred, and sit not thou down with them:

They appear unto thee in

sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Do not thou, then, seek in them the profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called; seeing that many, seeking such in these, have made shipwreck of their faith.

No matter, then, who he may be who offereth thee a bad book, and persuadeth thee to read it; answer him, It is not right. Say anathema to such a book.

But if, unawares, thou hast any books of such a sort in thy possession, cast them from thee without delay, and burn them.

Recollect that thou bearest the treasure of faith in an earthen vessel.

Expose it not to danger; knowing that its safe keeping, though thou be a priest, dependeth not on thine own strength, but on My grace.

5. Verily, My son, thou knowest that faith without works is dead.

What, then, will it profit thee to have kept the faith, if thou hast not fulfilled the work: that is to say, if thou hast not kept thy ways perfect?

Keep thyself, then, from books which corrupt the morals, just as much as thou dost from those which overturn the faith.

Behold, My son: by a thousand wiles the devil striveth to deceive thee: and since he knoweth, by experience, that priests generally shrink from impious books, then he craftily trieth to plot against their holiness by means of lighter ones.

That wicked one cometh with enticing words: Friend, saith he, a man cannot be for ever intent on his studies, for ever devote his attention to serious reading.

There must be some relaxation, some change: a bow always bent is easily broken.

At first, therefore, he sets before thee books harmless, indeed, but vain.

Take them and read them, he says: thou wilt not find even a shadow of evil: such and such men read them, and thou knowest that they are good men.

6. True is it, indeed, My son, that here the enemy doth not propose to thee a bad and unlawful thing: but Satan hath a hidden intention in his mind.

And what is it? Surely it is this: that he may first

turn thine eyes to behold vanities, and then he will move thine affections to them.

If, then, thou listen to him, and read such books as these—even only for the sake of a little amusement, but get to love them too well—as soon as he observeth in thee a wish for vain reading, then will he offer thee not only harmless books, but dangerous ones.

Few are the books, he will say, destined for amusement which are quite pure: in these and these a few things might be amended. Many read them, and without harm.

Thou hast kept thyself pure for a long time. Should anything improper occur in these books, thou wilt pass it by: or if thou dost read it, thou wilt do so passingly and cursorily.

Read, read: be not cowardly and timid.

7. But if thou, My son, yield to the tempter, and trusting in thy past purity, fear not to read such books, soon wilt thou find out that, like as a man cannot take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned, or go upon hot coals and his feet not be burned, even so he that readeth books full of impurities will soon fall away from real chastity.

Touch not that pitch, then: assuredly thou wilt be defiled thereby.

Read not even a single page in which there can be seen anything improper or immodest.

8. Such, then, My son, is the danger in immodest books, that whereas to the learned and wise, in other cases, licence may be given by their bishops to read the books of heretics, or even of the profane, never to any, nor by any, can be allowed the reading of books which are opposed to morality.

And surely, dearly beloved, thou, who art a good priest and a faithful steward, frequently from thy pulpit denouncest those who either possess or read writings of that sort.

And wherefore? Because thou knowest that evil communications corrupt good manners.

Because thou knowest that the spirit is ready to do evil, and the flesh weak and feeble.

But, My son, because thou art a priest, hast thou put off human spirit and human flesh?

Nay, surely.

Doubtless, in truth thou art bound to be more chaste, more holy, more perfect than others: but thou art a man, and surely, of thyself, thou art not stronger, firmer, more powerful than others: thou art not less prone to evil than they, and less weak.

What shall I, then, say to thee? Give ear, My son. So much the greater that thou art—so much the more chaste and holy that thou art bound to be—so much the more cautious be thou, so much the more keep thyself positively from every book having an appearance of evil.

The eyes of worldly men look upon certain slight things as mere trifles: let these things, however, in thine eyes, O priest, be regarded as blasphemies.

NOTE.—The injunctions in this chapter are directed against the evil works of the imagination so common on the Continent. They do not apply to the use of Fiction generally, especially in the present generally healthy tone of that department of literature in this country. Still, too much reading of this kind is to be avoided.—ED.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

OF DIVINE SERVICE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Bless the LORD, O thou priest of the LORD: bless the LORD, O thou servant of the LORD. Pray with the Spirit, and pray with the understanding also: sing with the Spirit, and sing with the understanding also.

Beware, lest, whilst thou honourest Me with thy lips, thy heart be far from Me: beware, lest thou make long prayers, and therefore receive the greater damnation.

Holy, holy, holy, I am, the LORD GOD of Sabaoth: heaven and earth are full of the majesty of My glory.

Hosanna in the highest to Me the angels cry: Hosanna upon the earth thou shalt say unto Me, My son. Oh! how great, how holy, how divine an office is thine!

Pay the service thou ow-

est: let not any part whatever of thy duty escape thee: pay it as thou oughtest: at its proper time, fittingly, attentively, and devoutly perform thy holy office: see thou do it not hurriedly, nor as a mere matter of course.

2. The spirit is willing, My son, but the flesh is weak. Before prayer, therefore, prepare thy soul, and be not as one that tempteth God.

By means of some meditation, put a check upon thine imagination, which is wont to wander to various things.

Lift up thine heart from earthly things to heavenly ones, from outward things to the inward, lift it up to Me.

Behold the harpers, before they harp, tune the chords of their instruments with previous care; if not, they will give nothing but a confused and inharmonious sound.

Thus compose thy mind. Say to vain and strange thoughts: Tarry ye here, whilst I pray: when I shall have fulfilled God's work, if I require you, I will take you up again.

Say to thine affections: O come let us sing unto the Lord: let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. O come let us worship and fall down.

3. Look upon Me as present; and before My Eyes, which search out the secrets of the heart, fulfil thy ministry—even as a servant under the eyes of his master, and as a maiden under the eyes of her mistress.

Remember that I am an austere Lord, cursing him that doeth My work negligently.

Behold with what respect ministers treat with their kings!

And I, My son, am the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and thou, when thou performest divine service, treatest with Me of the gravest matters, which concern all, as being My minister—of even remission of sins, of the justification of souls, of grace, of salvation, of eternal glory.

And canst thou dare in so great and so holy a work to turn aside thy mind to other matters—to treat a cause so great with hurried words and with lip service, casting thine eyes hither and thither—whilst Angels praise, Dominations adore, Powers tremble?

Fear, My son, My righteousness; be terrified at

My Countenance. A prince is not despised with impunity, how much less GOD!

4. I know, indeed, that as a leaf is carried away with the wind, so the mind of man is, by a slight influence, easily diverted from its attention, and wandereth in distraction, except it be carefully recalled.

Wherefore, My son, thou oughtest to watch in prayer, and on all occasions to keep alive thine attention.

Attend, therefore, as much as possible, to the sense of the words, that thou mayest move thine affection to taste and to judge.

The glory to the Trinity, at the end of the Psalms, pronounce with the whole feeling of thy soul: so will the mind be recalled, so will it be renewed, and be the more inflamed.

Remember that thou art performing angels' work: believe that with them thou standest before My Throne: and with them adore, praise, bless, love.

Imagine that thou art praying with Me in the garden of olives; and if thy mind be inclined to slumber, hearken unto Me; couldest thou not, My son, watch with Me one hour? watch and pray.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O LORD, I cannot even say, LORD JESUS, except in the HOLY SPIRIT: how, then, can I pray, without Thy grace?

Teach me, therefore, to pray: open Thou my lips: and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

Send out Thy Spirit, the Spirit of supplication and prayer; so that I be not in Thy sight as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.

LORD, Thou willest and commandest that my soul praise Thee; and I will sing unto Thee as long as I have any being. Give me what Thou commandest, and command what Thou willest.

CHAPTER XLIX.

OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Stand in awe of My Sanctuary, My son: let My people see thee stand in awe, and let them do the same themselves.

The Sanctuary is Mine, My son, not thine. Thou, indeed, presidest in it visibly, but I really.

Thou art there a priest and a shepherd over a people: and yet, notwithstanding, in My Eyes thou art dust and clay.

Thou hast the right of going in and approaching My Altar: and yet thou art unworthy of so great a privilege; yea, perhaps more unworthy than thy sheep.

This place is dreadful, My son: it is the House of GOD and the gate of heaven.

Fear, therefore, when thou enterest in, and let thy bones quake with trembling.

2. Behold what love I have unto thee, that thou shouldest be called, and be, My priest.

High and lofty is thy dignity, My son: and yet of itself it will not sanctify thee; but thou must sanctify it.

Honour thy ministry, therefore: keep the precepts and the ceremonies which I have commanded thee, to do them: let not one jot or one tittle pass till all be fulfilled.

Whilst thou art celebrating, whilst thou art performing the divine services, whilst thou art administering the Sacraments, let the people behold, and admire thy reverence and propriety in My worship, and thus let them be excited to holiness.

Let nothing appear in thy position, or movement, or walk, or voice, except that which is replete with modesty, gravity, humility, dignity, and awe.

Out of the abundance of a holy mind, let all things in the outward gesture of the body be ordered.

Oh! if thou hadst the sanctity of John the Baptist! Oh! if the people could see thy face, as the face of an angel, even as was Stephen's seen of old

time! how would they venerate thine office, and adore My mysteries.

3. But ye, O ye wicked priests, who despise My Table and My Sanctuary —who, by boldness of face, levity of look, pride in your walk, neglect of the ceremonies, hurrying over the services, cause My people to offend—how far will ye dishonour Me?

How long will ye tread under foot the faith and piety of My people? How long shall My sheep cry out in their wrath: Where is now their GOD?

Is it credible that He can come upon their altars? Is it credible that those who defile His Temple He will not destroy?

O LORD GOD, to Whom vengeance belongeth! Thou GOD, to Whom vengeance belongeth! Oh! if Thou shouldest reward these wicked ones after their deserving, Thou wouldest put them away, O LORD, my defender.

Verily, there would come upon them the curses which fell upon Nadab and Abihu: fire would come out of Thy tabernacle and devour them, and they would die in Thy presence.

By their life, they destroy faith; by their death, they would build it up.

Be not angry, I pray Thee, O LORD: rebuke them not in Thine indignation.

But in Thy mercy call out from heaven. Let them hear out of Thy mouth: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And so may these perverse ones be converted at last.

CHAPTER L.

OF THE CARE OF CHURCHES AND ALTARS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. The zeal of My FATHER's House hath eaten Me up, because I love Him: if thou lovest Me, My son, love the beauty of My House.

Behold how men, who love themselves, take care for their houses, their table,

their sleeping-rooms, their beds, their garments.

Behold what splendour and ornament there is in their houses: what elegance and magnificence in their tables: what extravagance in their chambers, their beds, their clothing.

Behold how careful mothers are about their children, that they may in all respects be neat and nicely dressed.

And thou, My son, canst thou suffer the House of thy Beloved to remain dirty, ruinous, and neglected, like a den of thieves, with the ornaments all torn and broken?

And canst thou allow My Altars, on which the sacrifice is offered, to be dirty and tattered?

And canst thou endure the vessels of the Sanctuary to be filthy, and covered with dust and rust?

Let those be ashamed and confounded, that allow such things to be, by their neglect.

O faithless generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?

2. I am GOD, and there is none other beside Me. In My love I came down unto men, that I might converse and live with them: that I might heal them and help them, and dispense all My gifts freely; but they have despised Me: I have become amongst them, as it were, a beggar, and poor.

Judge, My son, between Me and them. What is there that I ought to have done for them, and I have not done it? What is there that I ought to do, and I will not do it? But they forget Me, they acknowledge Me not, they despise Me.

These are the men who were My companions, My guides, My familiar friends, who took sweet counsel together with Me: yea, be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate: for I am become amongst them a worm and no man, a very scorn of men, and the outcast of the people.

My priests have not cared for My bread, and it is corrupt: it is full of worms, it causeth sickness, and I am forced to depart.

Behold, My son, and see if there be any reproach like My reproach: such things have I suffered in the house of them whom I loved.

3. O son! I hope better things of thee: thou wilt be faithful, reverent, and grateful towards Me.

Thou wilt go over My House: thou wilt remove the dirt in it: thou wilt take care that its dilapidations be restored: thou wilt provide for its ornaments to the very best of thy power: thou wilt look to My Altars: thou wilt take care of the cleanliness of the linen, the wholeness and decency of the veils and vestments, the beauty of the sacred furniture.

Thou wilt attentively look after the vessels of My Sanctuary, thou wilt clean them, cover them fittingly, and carefully put them by. Thou wilt see that what is needful for the Sacraments be changed and properly attended to.

I trust, My son, that thou wilt glow with the zeal of My House: and if thou canst not bestow glory and riches on My temple, at least thou wilt take good care that it be clean and neat.

CHAPTER LI.

OF ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF MEN'S SOULS.

The Voice of the Master.

1. I, the LORD, am zealous for the salvation of men's souls. They are the work of My hands, made after My Image and Likeness.

With constant love have I loved them; and in compassion that I might draw them unto Myself, I sent My SON into the world.

I was willing that He, My only-begotten SON, should be called JESUS; that is to say, the SAVIOUR of the world.

I was willing that the handwriting of the decree that was against men's souls He should take out of the way, nailing it to His Cross.

I am willing that, by His own Blood, He should reconcile men's souls unto Me.

Consider, My son, consider how precious in My sight are the souls of men.

For their sakes, I spared

not My only-begotten Son, but gave Him up for them.

2. Such am I, such is My Son, O dearly beloved! Even as I loved men's souls, so doth He also love them.

Even so I long after them, so doth He long after them.

Hear, hear Him calling out in the warmth of His heart: "I came that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly. How am I straitened, till this be accomplished!

"Come unto Me, all ye, and I will refresh you. Come, ye blind, that ye may see: come, ye lame, that ye may walk upright.

"Arise, ye dead: awake, ye that sleep in the dust of wickedness: arise, come forth from your tombs, and come unto Me.

"O, ye lost pieces of silver! When shall I find you? O, ye sheep gone astray? When shall I catch you?

"Come; I am the good Shepherd. Come; and though faithless, I will receive you, will embrace you, and will bear you on My shoulders.

"O beloved souls, whom I sought in weariness, whom I redeemed by My sufferings on the Cross! I go to Him that sent Me: but I will not leave you comfortless.

"Go ye unto them, My Apostles, as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. Go teach them all, care for them, heal them, make them holy.

"Peter, lovest thou Me? Feed men's souls, feed My sheep.

"I go to prepare a place for them. I desire that, together with Me, they may possess the kingdom of heaven: I desire that there, with Me, they may rejoice, and no man take their joy from them."

3. Such is My Son, such is the Holy Spirit: My Son loveth the souls of men, and He laid down His life for their sakes: the Holy Spirit loveth them, and for their sanctification He gave Himself and the gifts of His graces to the Apostles.

Yea, verily, for the sake of men's souls, He gave them the gift of tongues, the powers of preaching, of miracles, and of healing.

For their sake, this fostering Spirit ceaseth not, nor ever shall cease to rule and direct the Church, to inflame the hearts of her Ministers, to open their

mouths, to come down at the laying on of hands.

For their sake, the Spirit maketh intercession with groanings that cannot be uttered, and enlighteneth men's minds.

For their sake, It stirreth up the conscience of sinners with anguish, It urgeth on the slothful, It helpeth with grace the righteous.

Thus doth the Spirit spend Itself entirely for the service of men's souls.

4. Wherefore, My son, the sanctification of men's souls is the Will of God.

Wherefore, since thou art His minister and helper, for this alone oughtest thou to care—namely, the promoting, as far as in thee lieth, of the salvation of men's souls.

Verily, of all divine things, this is the most divine—to work together with God for the salvation of the souls of men.

Bestow, then, souls upon Him: take the rest upon thyself. Bestow souls on Him: and thou wilt make glad the heart of thy God, and His angels thou wilt make to rejoice, and thou wilt be worthy of double honour, and thou wilt save thyself, and thou shalt shine as a star for ever and ever.

5. Dost thou love Me, My son? Show Me thy love by thy works.

He that hath pity on the poor hath pity on Me: he that giveth to the poor giveth unto Me: he that doeth good to one of the least of My little ones doeth it unto Me.

How great a gift wilt thou present unto Me, if thou procure salvation for the souls which I have redeemed!

Surely the saving of souls is worth far more than food given to the poor.

6. Behold what a treasure of rewards thou layest up for thyself in the heavens, if thou be diligent in the salvation of the souls of men.

Whoso giveth a cup of cold water only in My Name shall not lose his reward.

What, then, will thy reward be, if thou bestowest souls upon Me!

He that causeth his brother to offend is himself guilty of his offence. And thou, if thou shalt save men, shalt be made a partaker of their conversion, of their holiness, and of all their good works.

7. Preach the word, therefore; be instant in

season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine, that thou mayest save souls. And I will make thee ruler over all My good things.

Oh! If thou couldst but save one soul, oughtest thou not to give thyself for it, even as I gave Myself for thee?

And how much more, when thou art able to save many, oughtest thou to be inflamed with a mighty zeal for their salvation!

O, My son. Wilt thou wittingly suffer thy brother to perish, for Whose sake My Son died?

Behold, the devil sleepeth not: but, as a roaring lion, he ever goeth about, that he may steal, slay, destroy, devour. And wilt thou, in the mean time, sleep? wilt thou fold thine arms and be silent?

8. O, My son! O Priest! Remember thy latter end: think of the tremendous hour of the Judgment, at which thou shalt give Me an account of thy stewardship.

What a joy will it be to thee if a multitude of souls, sanctified by thy ministry, shall hasten gloriously unto Me, that they may possess the fulness of My pleasure for evermore!

Oh blessed then wilt thou be! Thou thyself shalt sit on the throne and give judgment.

But what will be the grief unto thee, if thou shalt see a multitude of souls lost through thy fault, and cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth!

Oh then, wretch that thou wilt be! Oh how wilt thou then despair!

The blood of the sheep which I committed unto thee shall cry unto Me: and I will require their blood at thine hands.

CHAPTER LII.

OF PASTORAL VIGILANCE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, I am the good Shepherd, and I know My sheep. If thou wilt follow Me diligently consider the condition of thy flock. So watch, that whatever may happen by day or by night, thou mayest not forget that thou art the keeper of it.

If thou watch not, thou shalt be in My sight as the hireling that fleeth, who careth not for the sheep: and the wolf will come and scatter the sheep.

And when they shall be scattered thou wilt not know, and thou wilt not go after them till thou find them: and so shall they be for a prey for all the beasts of the field.

And at length their blood shall cry unto Me from the earth, saying, Woe unto our shepherd that fed himself, but fed not us: the wild beast hath devoured us, and he regarded not.

Avenge, O LORD, our blood: may the days of our shepherd be few: and his bishopric let another take: let him give an account for our souls.

Let his name be clean put out from the earth: let not his sin be done away, for that he remembered not to watch over us.

2. Do thou, therefore, watch, My son. But how oughtest thou to watch? Take an example from the best of mothers—from the faithful shepherd of the flock.

She knoweth the number of her children: he of his sheep.

She, in the midst of her children, worketh and is still, so that she may always have her eyes open upon them, or, at least, cast them upon them at the slightest sign.

He, going into the sheepfold, counteth up his sheep, he carefully shutteth them up, he visiteth them in the morning, when they go out he followeth them.

She anxiously observeth the motions, the words, the actions, the wants, the health, the sickness, the troubles, the affection, the naughtiness, the deceits, the modesty, the petulance—in a word, whatever concern-

eth her children: so that in all things she may take care of them, cherish them, correct, reprove, strengthen them, make them perfect.

He diligently attendeth to his sheep, which of them feed well, which feed not; which are healthy, which sickly; which are fat, which lean; which are steady, which are likely to run away: so that in all things he may give them what is fitting.

3. Assuredly, My son, thou oughtest to love My sheep more than a mother loveth her children, than a shepherd loveth his sheep.

For thou oughtest to love them for My sake; and all the more to love them, for that I would not have committed them unto thee, except I had had confidence in thy great love.

Verily, My son, if I had not believed that I was beloved by thee, I should not have said unto thee, "Feed My sheep."

Watch thou, therefore, even as a mother watcheth, even as a shepherd watcheth. Abide constantly in the midst of thy people; leave scarcely ever, except from necessity.

So know the number of thy sheep, that thou mayest be able to call them by their names.

Keep thine eyes and thine ears always attentively upon them, so that, whatever happen, thou mayest instantly perceive it, and so understand the disposition of each.

Visit thy flock so diligently that thou mayest always know what is the condition of this or that soul: what advice it may need, or what care: praise or blame: encouragement or correction.

Thus wilt thou see who are righteous, and them wilt thou make perfect and sanctify more and more: who are sinners and unrighteous, and them wilt thou call to repentance:

Who are the self-indulgent; and thou wilt endeavour to take away occasions of falling, to keep frail youth away from balls and dances, to repress vanity, to cut off dangerous meetings, to banish loose songs, and in their place carefully to bring in sacred hymns.

Thou wilt see who are at enmity with one another: and thou wilt strive to put out their hatred, and to promote a reconciliation.

Who are covetous, and thou wilt exhort them to be

liberal and compassionate: who are unjust and grasping, and thou wilt endeavour to abolish usury and fraud.

What husbands and wives agree not together: and thou wilt strive to establish the peace of My love betwixt them.

Who are evil-spoken, and thou wilt rebuke them: who are immodest in their talk or slanderous of their brethren, and thou wilt make them keep silence.

What parents take no care of their children, and thou wilt reprove them: what children obey not their parents, and thou wilt correct them.

Who are ignorant, and thou wilt have a care to teach them: who are negligent of the Sacraments and the divine offices, and thou wilt stir them up and urge them on.

Who are given to drink and pleasures, and them thou wilt terrify with threats of My anger.

What public places give an occasion for vice and iniquity, and these thou wilt cause to be suppressed or reformed, by calling in the civil power.

What books are circulated contrary to the faith and good morals—what are possessed and read by any—and these thou wilt, with all diligence, take care shall be removed, torn up, and burnt.

See how, by means of watchfulness, thou canst remedy all kinds of evils, procure the greatest good, be made all things to all men, as becometh a servant of GOD.

5. But without watchfulness, even though thou be ever so pious and learned, what wilt thou profit? What progress wilt thou make either in labouring or in teaching?

Thou wilt be, My son, as sounding brass, a tinkling cymbal: thou wilt strike the ear, but thou wilt not touch the real question.

Thou wilt treat of doctrine when thou oughtest to treat of morals: and of morals when thou oughtest to treat of doctrine.

Thou wilt point out remedies, and thou wilt use them against evils which exist not: and evils which are creeping in thou wilt allow to increase and to spread.

Thou wilt be a physician—learned, indeed, but mad—who, not observing his patient, has a care for a

stomach which is healthy, whilst he ought to have turned his attention to a weak chest.

Wherefore, carefully watch over thy field: so that thou mayest fitly plant where there is nothing: water where there is drought: lay on manure where there is barrenness.

CHAPTER LIII.

OF CATECHISING LITTLE CHILDREN.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Break bread, My son, for My little ones: they, above all others, are dear unto Me, and beloved. Lead them unto Me; of such is the kingdom of heaven.

Of children, well brought up and educated, a people is made strong and honourable: of children, well taught and disciplined, there cometh a society of faithful ones, and a nation of saints.

Even as the harvest dependeth on the seed-time, just so doth the sanctification of men from early instruction.

Sow, My son, that thou mayest reap: cast into the hearts of children the seeds of piety and holy fear; water it with the dew of constant exhortation: it will sprout up and increase, and yield forth fruit in due season.

Soft as wax are the hearts of children; any impression that thou willest they will easily receive. Impress, therefore, on them the form of holiness, and it will remain,

2. Be not ashamed, My son, to be thyself like a little child in the midst of them, and like a nurse that cherisheth her children: for I was not ashamed to be a man amongst men that I might redeem thee.

Paul was not ashamed to become weak to the weak: he was made all things to all men, that he might, by all means, save some.

Imitate Elijah and Elisha. That they might impart the spirit of life into a child, they feared not to contract their limbs to the

littleness of a little child's —fittingly to place mouth upon mouth, hands upon hands, feet upon feet: so that, by conforming themselves to the child, they breathed into him the breath of life.

And thus thou, also, although eminent in knowledge, wilt not disdain to let thyself down to the capacity of children and ignorant persons: so that thou mayest breathe into them the spirit of grace; and before them that cannot yet bear strong meat, place milk, that they may grow unto salvation.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. O, most loving JESU! Who any more can be ashamed to be humble towards little children, when Thou, Who art GOD, mercifully inclinedst Thine Arms to the embraces of children, and enfoldedst them in Thy Bosom.

Give me some one who is spiritual! that seeketh not the things that are his own, but which are Thine; that is entirely filled with love, and humility, and piety: that man will understand how good and how pleasant, how necessary and glorious a thing it is to devote oneself to the instruction of little children.

The Voice of the Beloved.

4. Weary, indeed, My son, is the soul of the proud at this office; but to holy ministers it is a burden beloved, an excellent work, a difficult one; but yet the gift cometh of GOD.

For what is greater than to enlighten, to sanctify, to make perfect, to save souls? And yet, when are they more enlightened, sanctified, made perfect, saved, than when little children are being taught?

Very often, perhaps, My son, thou hast eloquently preached from the sacred pulpit: and how many hast thou converted? Thou hast worked more magnificently than with the little ones: but what fruit was there?

The seed fell on a rock, and when it sprang up it withered, because it lacked moisture.

Sow, My son, on the good ground, on hearts as yet innocent. Thy simplicity will be, indeed, a light despised in the thoughts of the rich: but the seed will spring up, it will bring forth fruit an hundred fold: and what thou hast sown in humility thou shalt reap in joy.

5. Teach the little ones, therefore, and teach them frequently. Speak not high things, speak not many things; but few and plain, fitted for their capacity, clear, often and in diverse ways repeated.

Not too domineeringly, but sweetly and lovingly, except they be perverse and rebellious: not too familiarly, but paternally; not in a joking way, but modestly and religiously.

Do not explain doctrines and precepts alone; but give them examples and motives.

Let them reverence thee, fear thee, love thee, rejoice to listen to thee: so shall thy words, softer than oil, become very swords, which, once fixed in their hearts, shall there remain.

6. And take not care of their instruction alone: for what is knowledge without virtue? Watch, therefore, carefully over their life.

Several times in the year, gather together thy little flock, and diligently regard its appearance.

Hear the little ones: interrogate them: thou wilt often find that wickedness has prevented age, and that for those scarcely born restraints are needful.

Then put on restraints, and the bad disposition will be checked—the serpent, as yet but small, will be slain. Thou wilt root out vices, thou wilt plant piety, thou wilt water with prayer, and it will increase.

But if thou do not attend to them assiduously, and do not prevent the first motions of sin, there will arise thorns—they will grow up high, they will choke all the good seed: and thus, at the season of harvest, there will be found nothing but tares, to be tied into bundles for the burning.

CHAPTER LIV.

OF INSTRUCTING THE POOR AND IGNORANT.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. With Me there is no respect of persons: all souls are Mine: all are redeemed with My Blood.

There is neither rich nor

poor in My sight: the same eternity awaiteth both: the same glory, if they be saved: the same damnation, if they perish.

They have the same FATHER in heaven, the same Church for their Mother on earth, the same spiritual food in the Sacraments.

Yea, verily, the FATHER sent Me to preach the Gospel unto the poor: thou, My son, art sent for the same work: see, therefore, that thou fulfil thy ministry.

2. Thou dost preach, thou dost catechise: and yet are there not many who are hidden from thy zeal?

Are there not many of thy sheep sticking in the filth of poverty, and its kindred vices, without instruction?

Are there not many who, overcome by too great a modesty—by reason of their lack of necessaries, by reason of their want of decent apparel—dare not make their appearance in the church, nor be present at the instructions?

Are there not many who, by reason of their distance from the church, in the woods or remote situations, or by reason of their care for cattle, cannot come to divine service? And thus they evidently continue ignorant and wild in their darkness, and in the dark night of ignorance.

O shepherd, what about these sheep? I preach, thou sayest; I catechise: let them come and they will hear. O, My son! I do not find thy work accomplished.

To My Apostles I said not only, Teach ye; but, Go and teach. And unto thee I say, My son, Go out into the ways and the hedges: seek out the weak, the blind, the lame; call them, compel them to come in, that My heavenly house may be filled.

3. But "I exhort them," thou sayest, "to come and hear." My son, is it enough for the shepherd to call to the wandering sheep? Nay, truly: but he runneth, until he find them.

I am the Good Shepherd; whilst I was in the world, such sheep I not only waited for, but I even ardently sought them in the wilderness.

I waited not for thee thyself, My son, but I sought thee: except I had sought thee first and led thee back, where hadst thou been?

I went to the woman of Samaria at the well: there

did I catechise, there did I preach the Gospel unto her.

Behold how My Apostles went through streets, and houses, and country villages, and desert places, to impart to all the true doctrine, the light of grace, the blessing of peace.

Behold how Borromeo and Francis of Sales, went creeping, as it were, through places rugged and impassable, to get at people hitherto unapproached, and to preach the Gospel to the poor.

4. Run thou, also, My son, run to the distant sheep, and let them hear thy voice. Visit them, even as I, the day-spring from on high, have visited, to give light to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death: gather them together, that thou mayest give unto them their meat in due season.

If thy flock be too large for thee to be able to carry specially to each of the ignorant sheep the help of a holy teaching, have a care that the ignorant sheep be taught by some wise, discreet, and prudent persons.

And do thou thyself overlook all and watch; frequently require an account: and do not rest until thou know that they are walking in light and holiness—that they are instructed and pious.

The labour is great, perhaps thou wilt say: what is it that thou sayest, My son?

Cease complaining, when thou considerest My labours and those of My Saints for the salvation of souls.

"Be thou ashamed, O Zidon, for the sea hath spoken:" and if thou inquire the cause, hearken wherefore: for a small gain, a long way is run over; and yet, for the sake of precious souls, the foot is scarcely once lifted off the ground.

CHAPTER LV.

OF THE PREACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Woe unto thee, My son, if thou preach not the Gospel! Cry aloud, spare not: lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgressions and their sins.

Call them unto repentance: teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded them.

If thou preach not, and they perish, their blood will I require at thine hand: if thou preach, and they do it not, thou hast freed thine own soul.

Speak of My testimonies before kings, and be not confounded: for it is not thou that speakest, but the Spirit of My FATHER that speaketh in thee.

2. Thou hast heard the command, My son: woe unto thee if thou obey it not: thou shalt be punished for ever in damnation when I come to judgment.

Thou hast heard what is the ministry committed unto thee: behold how high it is! Thou art appointed the helper of GOD: thou art an ambassador in His stead, as if GOD did beseech by thee.

Through thee, as through a water pipe, He sendeth out His Word, He divideth His favours and rewards.

And wouldst thou be slothful in fulfilling a command so mighty and so honourable! On Sabbaths and on new moons, on Sundays and on festivals, wouldst thou keep thy lips closed! Far be it from thee, My son, far from thee! Preach the word, preach it constantly.

Man liveth not by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of My Mouth: give this Bread, which cometh down from heaven, unto the sheep committed unto thee, that they die not; give it unto them frequently, that they may grow thereby, and be strengthened.

3. I wrought first, then I taught: thus did I preach, My son. Work thou, therefore, first, so that, being fashioned after the pattern of My flock, thou mayest

feed them from thy very soul.

That will be the best kind of preaching in which thou shalt speak unto My sheep, more by example than by words, Be ye followers of Me, as I am of CHRIST: so walk, as ye have us for ensample.

How canst thou commend good qualities, if thou be without them thyself? How canst thou cut off vices, if thou thyself live in them? Be holy, chaste, sober, just, merciful, pious, if thou wouldest make others so.

Let not thy works make thy speech of none effect; lest, when thou speakest in the church, some listener should answer, Wherefore dost thou not do thyself this, what thou sayest?

4. Preach, not with the persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in the righteousness of GOD, My son. I did not send thee that men should admire thee, but that, through thee, they should be converted unto Me.

Whilst I abode amongst men, I uttered not speeches which tickle the ears, but such as pierce the heart: deny thyself, My son, and follow Me.

Seek thou My glory: seek the salvation of thy neighbour: say nothing which may not lead to these objects: utter nothing which may go beyond the comprehension of the common people.

Preach that thou mayest be heard and understood: not that thou mayest bring forth an empty sound: avoid, therefore, profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called.

5. I am He, that teacheth the hands to war and the fingers to fight: presume not, therefore, to fight with the sword of preaching, except thou be dedicated thereto by Me.

Learn by means of prayer; call upon Me, and there shall come unto thee the spirit of wisdom. Learn by study: search the Scriptures, there shalt thou find weapons.

Receive of My teaching what thou shalt expound in the church: for thou shalt not preach unto them from thyself, but from Me.

Fill, therefore, thy heart with My eloquence, so that out of the abundance of thy heart thy mouth may speak.

Learn before thou teachest: otherwise thou wilt be

a cloud without water, and thou wilt present but barren breasts.

6. When thou art about to go up into the pulpit, think upon Me as present: that I, the Eternal Word, make use of thy voice for the saving of souls.

Thus, as if made one with Me, with My Spirit, with My Love, with My Power, speak the things which become sound doctrine.

Be not foolish, self-complacent, if thy speech run easily: be not over-much confused, if it be faltering.

Thou canst do nothing without My grace; attribute, therefore, all the success to Me, and all the defects impute, with humility, unto thyself.

How well soever thou mayest have preached, what hast thou done? Thou hast planted, thou hast watered. I alone give the increase. Pray Me, therefore, that I may bring forth fruit out of thy labours.

7. Be not faint-hearted, My son, if there ensue but little fruit from thy sermons: I demand of thee the care, not the curing [of souls].

If men will not receive thy peace, it shall return unto thee, and it shall not lose its reward.

Cease not, therefore, to preach because thou seest not the fruit: very often the fruit is hidden and appeareth not.

If, then, by a hundred sermons, thou shalt gain unto Me one soul only, would it not be a great thing? Dost thou know of what value one soul is? Of such value, My son, that for it did I shed My Blood.

Labour unweariedly, always looking out for a larger fruit from My goodness.

When, after toiling all night, thou shalt have taken nothing, at one cast, perhaps, thou wilt draw in a great multitude of fishes: in My Name, then, let down the net: preach with all patience.

8. Lastly, when thou hast done all, say, I am an unprofitable servant; I have done that which was my duty to do.

Fear lest, by any means, when thou hast preached to others, thou thyself should be a castaway.

For many will come and say, LORD, LORD, have we not preached in Thy Name, have we not done many wonderful works? And I

will profess unto them, I never knew you.

O son! How many preachers are there being tortured in hell, who had more eloquence and address in speaking than thou hast, and who drew from a wicked to a holy life more than thou!

And yet they themselves have miserably perished: and why so? For that reason especially, because, being puffed up with pride and self-sufficiency, they did not account these good things as received from GOD, but claimed them as their own.

Wherefore, greedy of the praise of men, and puffed up with a vain opinion of themselves, desirous of empty glory, the LORD suffered them to reach that point for which they were so eager, and from whence they fell to eternal damnation.

CHAPTER LVI.[1]

OF THE HEARING OF CONFESSION.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Thou hast received the HOLY SPIRIT, My son, and thou art appointed as a judge of My people: thou shalt bind and loose, thou shalt forgive sins, thou shalt retain sins.

Lo! I have given unto thee My rights: what power, My son, what honour! But what an office! Surely one to be dreaded by angels' shoulders. What an act! Surely the act of acts!

Thy duty it is to cure diseases, not such as happen to the body, but such as destroy body and soul in hell. What knowledge, then, must the lips of so great a physician keep.

Thy duty it is to snatch and to save, not the flesh from death, but souls from

[1] As the English Church recommends Confession at the hour of death, and in cases of scruple before communicating, I have left these Chapters much as I found them; but as the language is suited to a state of things in which Confession is *enforced* in all cases, some of it may appear unreal.—ED.

eternal damnation. What prudence and mercy is it necessary, then, that thy mind should possess.

Thy duty it is to give judgments, not upon the disputes and rights of men one between another, but about My own laws betwixt Me and them. What sense of equity, therefore, ought the mind of so great a judge to entertain!

Seek for knowledge in books, and by study: but the wisdom of prudence, of mercy, and of equity, draw thou down from heaven by prayer.

I am the FATHER of lights, that giveth to all men abundantly: ask, My son, and thou shalt receive.

2. Lay not up in a napkin the talent which I have given thee: knowing that I am an austere Man, neglect not, therefore, to exercise thy dreaded ministry.

Having the power to save, it is not now allowed thee to keep thyself from the work of salvation.

Do according to that which is in thee; study, pray, act, absolve, bind, as thou shalt deem best, in My presence: then leave all things unto Me.

I know whom I have: they are men, and not angels, whom I have appointed My priests.

3. Laborious, in truth, is this ministry, My son: beware, lest, for that reason, thou become slothful and neglect it.

From My youth up, I was constantly in labours: it is a small thing, then, if thou spend days, months, and years in the work of saving souls; whereas I shed My Blood, and gave My life for it.

This chastening, indeed, is not, at first, joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward, it yieldeth peaceable fruit to them that are exercised thereby.

There, verily, is the fruitful labour: there are the sheep found, and led home: there is joy in heaven, joy in the presence of angels.

There are the impure made chaste, the unjust rendered honest, calumniators are amended, enemies are reconciled.

There are the blasphemers corrected, the sacrilegious drawn from the deep: there the unlearned get knowledge, and the imprudent wisdom.

There are spots wiped away, wounds healed, sins taken away, innocency restored to the fallen, and

beauty, which before was marred, returneth.

There is the blessed way of heaven opened, hell is shut, the devil is bound, and My peace is given.

There is milk given unto the weak, and strong meat to the healthy.

There are the little ones strengthened; but the strong are tried, the righteous are made more righteous still, and the holy more holy still.

There is the fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

Behold, My son, what great things thou hast in thy power to give to My sheep in the hearing of their confession: if thou know the good, therefore, and doest it not, how shall it not be sin unto thee?

4. Call, therefore, sinners unto repentance: if thou neglect to call and to hear them, the wolf will come and scatter the sheep: love will grow cold; iniquity will abound.

In youth, there will be no chastity; no modesty between husband and wife; amongst tradesmen, no upright dealing; no faithfulness in servants; in masters, no justice; in parents, no care; in children no obedience.

Briefly, in a word, no piety in the whole flock, no faith, no religion.

5. O, thou priest! O thou, above all, that hast the care of souls! Behold and consider what a burden of sins thou heapest on thy head, if thou neglect to call the sheep frequently to confession, and, when they come, hearest them not: or hearing them, dost it without care, without zeal, without justice.

What wilt thou answer, when thou art called to My Judgment-seat, and shalt be judged by Me, and accused by thy sheep, which shall say: We are undone, because we had no man that would put us into the pool?

CHAPTER LVII.

OF THE OBSERVANCE OF GENTLENESS AND MERCY IN HEARING CONFESSIONS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, be thou merciful, as thy FATHER, Which is in heaven, is merciful: learn of Me, for I am meek of heart.

The bruised reed I did not break, the smoking flax I did not quench, but My sheep, that had gone astray, I gently laid on My shoulders, rejoicing.

I commended and forgave the woman that was a sinner when she wept for her sins: I looked on Peter in mercy: to the penitent thief, I graciously opened Paradise.

Behold how it was My property ever to have mercy and to forgive.

2. Behold, then, with what kindness thou, who art the steward of My mysteries, art bound to behave towards those sinners that come unto the seat of repentance.

One hath come from a far country; that is to say, for many months—and perhaps years—he hath forgotten GOD, his Maker, and hath been unmindful of his soul's health; but at last he hath said within himself, I will arise, and go to my FATHER. He ariseth, and cometh.

O son, receive him rejoicing—receive him with gentleness: surely, when he was astray, thou wast bound to seek him diligently: how much more, when he returneth, art thou bound not to reject him?

Another draweth near, weighed down with his wickedness—sunk, as it were, in the very depth of the filth of his vices, full of sores, covered with filthy rags.

O son, do not thou shrink from him from over-much zeal; do not rebuke—do not chide him at first. But, on the contrary, speak lovingly unto him, even as I do: Come unto me, thou that art weary and heavy laden: come in faith, and I will refresh thee in the LORD.

Follow the pattern of the father of the prodigal son, which I showed unto thee.

Behold, My son, attend: there cometh the son whom the father had very greatly loved, and who had most shamefully fled from him:

Who before, in his father's house, had abounded in good things, and who had spent his substance in riotous living:

Who once was clothed in costly raiments, and afterwards was covered with rags and tatters: he had been ungrateful, he had been impious, he had been wicked.

At length he cometh: the father seeth him, and runneth up to him, he falleth on his neck and kisseth him, he batheth him with his tears, he raiseth him with his hand, he kindly leadeth him, covereth him with the best garments, giveth him a ring, refresheth him with the fatted calf, he celebrateth his return with music and dancing.

Behold, My son, the offended father chideth not: he giveth no sign of anger —no sign, indeed, of grief.

By this parable, what did I wish to show forth? Hearken, My son: by this did I say unto sinners, that they should return unto thee, as unto a father, without fear: and unto thee did I say, that thou shouldest receive them without severity.

3. Know, My son, know of what spirit thou art. I send thee not to lose souls, but to gain souls—to save souls.

And for that reason did I set thee, a sinner, over them, so that thou, knowing how I had pity on thee, mightest also know how thou oughtest to have pity on them.

Doubtless, I did command thee with power, and as a trumpet thou shouldst lift thy voice, and shouldst tell them of their sins: but where, and when, My son?

Where? In the pulpit, where thou teachest, where thou callest, where thou strivest to arouse the fearless.

When? When they are hardened, when they turn not in heart, when they think not of conversion.

Then say unto them, together with Me, O generation of vipers! Woe unto you, hypocrites! Woe unto you that laugh now! Woe unto you that walk in the easy and broad way!

But in confession, when they come to be cured, speak unto them, My son, with kindness: lo, I am pre-

sent to cure you, to disburthen you, to gather you under My wings.

O, My little children! of whom I travail in birth again, until CHRIST be formed in you! Come ye; our GOD never despiseth a contrite and humbled heart.

O come and repent ye: and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red, like crimson, they shall be as wool. My little children, if ye be obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

Thus let thy words be smoother than oil, and they shall be very swords.

4. But if, My son, thou rebuke too sharply at the first, or even in the course of confession, when there is no necessity, what will come to pass?

The sheep, now just returning to the door of the sheepfold, either, being terrified, will flee away, supposing that it hath alighted on the wolf, and not the shepherd; or else the sheep will go through the matter without confidence, thinking that thou art a tyrant, and not a father.

Or else the sheep will even conceal those wounds which are the deepest and the most dangerous, accounting that, in the minister, there is a torturer, and not a physician.

And thus, through thy fault, will thy brother perish, for whom I died—whom I had sent unto thee—whom I trustingly had committed unto thee.

5. Let thy words, therefore, be good—be consolatory; but let a gentle rule of direction agree with thy words.

Thou wilt remember, My son, that thy penitent brother is a man, and not an angel: thou wilt remember that thou art the minister, not of justice that seeketh vengeance, but of justice that delighteth in mercy.

Take care not to put thy new wine into old bottles: not to sew a piece of new cloth on an old garment: not to lay burthens, grievous and hard to be borne, on men's shoulders, which thou, perhaps, wouldst not move with one of thy fingers.

6. And yet, My son, make them observe all things that I have commanded thee: teach them to cease to do evil: teach them to learn to do well, according to My Commandments.

And think not that it is

a merciful thing to cast thy pearls before swine; or to give angels' food unto those who delight in the husks of swine.

Or that it is a kind thing to remit the sins of those in whom there is no amendment; to loose the transgressions of those whose repentance and contrition, upon careful consideration, is not deemed effective and true.

Understand, My son, the things that I say. Wouldst thou call that mercy, if one should come and confess some very slight sins, and for the rest should say that he was innocent—whilst, however, others of his condition are addicted to grievous sins—and thou, however, dost not ask him, but passest it all over, and absolvest him?

Why, My son, this is not to save souls, but to lose them!

Are there not many, at the very point of death, who say unto the physician, I am quite well? And if the physician believe this assertion, and say, "All is well, my friend, get up, eat, drink:" verily, the patient will die; and when he is dead, wilt thou praise the physician?

Surely thou wilt condemn him, and say, he ought to have made further inquiries—he ought to have asked more particularly.

Inquire, therefore, My son: probe deeply: say, How much owest thou to my LORD? So that thou mayest be able to add, Pay that thou owest: cease from this evil: do this good which is commanded thee: otherwise thou shalt not live, my brother, but die.

7. Wouldest thou, then, call that mercy, if another should come and confess that he is full of ulcers of long standing, accustomed to sin, and thou shouldst say, Art thou in pain, my brother? And when he answers, I am in pain, thou, without corresponding proof and a sufficient amendment, shouldst straightway pass it over and absolve him?

Why, My son, this is not to save souls, but to lose them!

Thou showest to a surgeon a wound, in a state of mortification, in one of thy limbs. The limb ought to be amputated, so that the body may be saved.

But he dareth not to propose this to thee, nor to say that it is necessary; but

he merely dresseth the wound, and bandageth it.

Shortly, the mortification creepeth on: now the evil hath become incurable: now thou must die. What wilt thou think of the surgeon?

Assuredly thou wilt say, I showed him the wound with confidence, that he might cure it. If he had said that the limb must, of necessity, be amputated, I should have consented. He did not say so: he gave no such counsel: he is answerable for my death.

Change the name, My son. Such is that priest who either did with soft, flattering words, or else, avoiding trouble, did not command a sinner, who was given to this or that habit, saying, My brother, thine hand offendeth thee: cut it off, and cast it from thee. Thy foot, thine eye offendeth thee: cut it off, pluck it out, cast it from thee: otherwise, together with them, thou shalt be cast into hell-fire.

That is to say, except thou cast away those iniquities to which thou hast accustomed thyself, they shall not be forgiven thee either in this world, or in the world to come.

8. Surely, My son, if thou desirest the good of the penitent—if thou dost wish, as thou oughtest, mercifully to save his soul—thou must take care that his sin be not outwardly concealed, but that it may be, verily, blotted out from within, taken away, utterly depart.

Which, in truth, cannot be, except the penitent be really sorrowful—except he sincerely renounce his sin, give over the habit and shun the occasions of it, restore those things unjustly kept, be reconciled with his enemies, bind up the wounds he hath inflicted.

But then, My son, what kind of mercy is that which altogether blindly, without rule and without forethought, granteth the benefit of absolution to any one, however unfit he may be?

Oh, false peace! which leaveth war in the heart: oh, deceptive medicine! which giveth sleep, and not cure—which killeth instead of restoring to life!

Oh, unjust judgment, by which My Laws are betrayed for the satisfaction of a man who desireth it amiss.

Verily, My son, he that, either knowingly, or else through culpable ignorance, absolveth a sinner that is

not contrite and not turned from his iniquity, that man presumeth to give My peace to My enemy whilst he hateth Me; he betrayeth Me into the hands of My enemy to be crucified.

9. Behold, My son, how, sometimes, My House is made a den of thieves; behold how, therein, incautious priests act wrongly and perversely.

O these new Pilates! who thus, through idleness and culpable indulgence, betray Me to whosoever asketh of them.

O these prophets of iniquity! that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature, and thus strengthen the hands of the wicked that he should not return from his wicked way —and thus make their proselytes two-fold more children of hell than before.

They shall bear, indeed, their own iniquity according to the iniquity of them: so shall the iniquity of those false prophets be.

Assuredly, My wrath shall come upon them: for they exercise not the judgment of man, but of the LORD: and with what measure they have judged, so shall it be measured to them again.

10. My son, My son, far be from thee such unjust, such cruel, such wicked mercy.

Remember that there is given unto thee the power and command not only of loosing, but of binding also.

A ministry, indeed, hath been committed unto thee, but not without instruction, not without rules, not without commands.

Keep, therefore, those things carefully, and take care that, in thy ministry, mercy and truth may meet together, righteousness and peace may kiss each other. So shalt thou be a faithful and prudent steward.

NOTE.—The instructions in the latter part of this Section do not apply to the circumstances of our Church. Where Confession is left quite free, and in practice is exceptional, a proper degree of contrition may be presumed.

CHAPTER LVIII.

OF ZEAL FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I bore thy sins upon the Cross, My son, so that, dead unto sin, thou mightest live unto righteousness.

I came, I laboured, I preached, I suffered, I died, that the body of sin might be destroyed.

Desirest thou, then, My son, to be a shepherd after Mine own Heart? Labour faithfully for the destroying of iniquity.

Draw, as far as in thee lieth, sinners unto the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Go thou unto them: and even as the angels led forth Lot out of Sodom, lay hold on the hand of them that follow in the way of destruction, and strive to lead them back unto the way of salvation.

2. O, My son, lovest thou Me? Behold, these men crucify Me afresh daily in themselves, they load Me with insults, smite Me on the cheek, lash Me with scourges, crown Me with thorns: and canst thou behold all these things cold and unmoved!

The holy women wept when they saw Me on the way to Calvary, fainting under the Cross, and with wounds: they groaned within themselves, not being able to set Me free: and thou, My son, thou art able to preserve Me from a fresh passion, wouldest not thou do it!

And thou, My friend, wouldest not thou stand for Me against sinners, who daily, with impious hands, strike and tear Me!

Remove, remove, as far as in thee lieth, these abominations of wickedness: convert sinners, so that, leaving off sins, they may spare Me.

3. My friends, Mine acquaintance have gone away from Me: they have left Me and fled.

Impieties, thefts, immodesty, adulteries, blasphemies, drunkenness, craft, deceit, detractions, are multiplied, and increase day by day: of evils there is no end: and yet My priests keep silence.

O, My friends! How are ye become cruel unto

Me? O, ye priests, seek discipline, lest I be angry, and so ye perish from the right way.

4. My sheep have gone astray in the paths of hell, they have hastened unto the depths of torment: and those whom I appointed the keepers of My flock cry not out, run not, do not bring back My sheep.

They are scattered under the very eyes of the shepherd: and have become a prey unto the beasts of the field.

Woe to the idle shepherds that leave My flock: in Mine anger I will rebuke you, and chasten you in My heavy displeasure: I will send fire and worms into your flesh, that ye may be burned, and suffer for evermore.

5. My son, My son, if any one hath erred from the truth, convert him, and save his soul from death.

Weep over him: lay hold on him, admonish, counsel, exhort, show him loving-kindness: lay hold on his feet, be not ashamed to kiss them.

Call out unto him of My judgments, show unto him the devouring fire, the eternal burnings.

Compel him to repent, even as a good physician compelleth his patient to take medicine.

6. Behold John, the disciple that I loved: behold how that young man, whom he had before commended unto the bishop, but who afterwards became the chief of a band of robbers, he, though now an old man, sought, amidst the daggers of assassins, over mountains and through woods, and brought home, and converted. Go thou unto sinners, and do likewise.

CHAPTER LIX.

OF PRAYER FOR SINNERS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I asked of the FATHER, and He hath given Me the Heathen for Mine inheritance.

Ask thou, My son, and

He will grant unto thee the conversion of sinners.

To Stephen, when he asked, He gave Paul: to the supplicating Monica, He gave Augustine: ask thou, also, and thou shalt receive.

Verily, I say unto thee, if thou ask anything of the FATHER in My Name, He will give it unto thee: believe that thou shalt receive, and it shall be so done unto thee.

2. Hast thou heard, My son, of the force and power of prayer? I, the LORD, have sworn it, and I will not repent.

If, therefore, there be in the flock entrusted unto thee any wandering sheep, or any that are even now perishing, whom, by the voice of admonition, of entreaty, of rebuke, thou hast not been able to bring home, then pray.

Thou hast given them an example, thou hast preached the word: there remaineth prayer: these three, but the greatest is prayer.

Pray, therefore, that My FATHER may send His Spirit, the Comforter, that He may speak unto their hearts, and convert them, and break asunder their bonds.

What, to other prayers, He hath so often granted, why should He refuse the same unto thee, that askest earnestly? Pray for all; but pray especially for sinners.

3. I am the Advocate with the FATHER, I am His Anointed: He will gladly look upon My Face.

My Blood, in His sight, speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Behold, My son, I am in thine hand: offer up My Blood, offer My Body, offer Me entirely unto the FATHER in sacrifice, with the whole power of compassion, for the sake of sinners, that they may be converted.

Offer Me especially for them whom thou knowest to be heavy laden with sins of a heavier weight, and bound with chains of the straitest kind.

Offer Me: I am the propitiation for sins and for sinners. Offer Me: this have My Saints always done, and therefore it was that they converted so many sinners.

CHAPTER LX.

THE CARE OF THE SICK.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I was sick, and ye visited me not: such is the charge, My son, which, at the day of judgment, I shall bring against men: how much more against priests!

It is a sin not to bring unto the sick the remedies which are fitted for their bodies: how much more not to minister unto them the things for their souls!

In sickness, the body is in danger; but how much more is the soul in danger!

The one, indeed, returneth unto dust, but the other shall go to judgment: it shall go unto its everlasting home.

But it is a fearful thing, My son, to fall into the hands of the living GOD: with what diligence, then, oughtest thou to prepare souls for their departure.

Oh! If, through thy fault, one soul only be deprived of sanctifying grace to its ultimate peril—if, by thy neglect, it be without absolution, without the Communion, and without the last offices, and so stand before Me covered with its sins, and be condemned in the judgment—what a sin hast thou committed! what vengeance is laid up for thee!

For ever and ever shall the lost soul curse thee; through all eternity torment and torture thee!

2. When, therefore, thou shalt hear of any of thy flock that is sick, go quickly to him.

And after thou hast shown thyself full of sympathy for his pains, and, by kindness, hast gently made an entrance into his heart, then make offer of thy ministry.

If, when offered, he receive it, then fulfil thine office: if he receive it not, and his sickness appear serious, then insist, entreat, rebuke, compel. No carelessness is so great as that where eternity is endangered.

Go not away, therefore, until thou hast taken the sheep upon thy shoulders.

3. Having invoked the Spirit of grace, then receive the sick man's confession.

Aid him: beware, lest,

by discoursing with him too long, thou fatigue his mind, already weakened by disease: nevertheless, search into and inquire about all that is really necessary.

Especially, ask and see whether there be any fault which, in confession, he hath hitherto hidden and concealed, but which now weighs upon his conscience.

Away with false shame: dig deep; draw out, as it were, from the grave, the bones of the dead.

Oh what large wounds wilt thou oftentimes find! What transgressions, which, except thou extract them with prudence, the sick will retain, even unto death, and which will sleep with them in the dust.

Oh what a service hast thou done, if thou hast extracted this abominable secret! What comfort hast thou bestowed upon the sick man! What hindrances to salvation hast thou removed! Blessed wilt thou be, My son, if thou shalt do this.

And still further, busy thyself, as far as the state and circumstances of the patient allow, in exposing the chief sins of his life.

Teach him to put away the immediate causes of offence, to repair injury done by scandal, to be reconciled to his enemies, to make restitution, and take care that all this be really done.

4. When his confession is received, then, with all thine heart, address thyself unto his heart: use thy weapons, excite his grief, persuade him to be contrite: to the utmost of thy power, provoke his tears, inflame his love, instil into him trust in GOD.

Many a sinner confesseth at the hour of death, and yet few are saved, because there is no contrition—which, if it were but present to a trifling degree, it would make the sick man, though most impious, penitent and holy.

Wherefore, with all the powers of thy mind, strive to bring the sick man to the very highest degree of contrition that thou possibly canst.

5. This sacred ministry being fulfilled, when the sick man is refreshed with the Holy Eucharist, yet leave him not.

Thou hast brought forth a son to GOD: do thy diligence, as a fond mother, to nurse this son: and now that he is prepared, more and more lead him unto

righteousness and sanctification.

At the hour of sickness and weakness, the devil is more and more diligent, knowing that his time is short.

Wherefore, frequently visit the sick man, so that thou mayest strengthen him against the assaults of the enemy, confirm him in the grace of GOD, aid him in his pains, comfort him in his anxieties, and constantly, even yet, grant him absolution.

Suggest to him acts of holy faith, hope, charity, and contrition: inspire him with desires of eternal bliss.

Recommend submission to the will of GOD: exhort him to patience: make him constantly regard the Cross of the LORD.

6. But if, by reason of thy many labours, thou art not able frequently to go to the sick man, have a care, My son, that some holy and prudent person, who can constantly advise thee of the state of the sick man, afford him the aforesaid aid—provided that, at all events, in the greater danger, thine own presence be not wanting to the patient.

Unto the spiritual things, according to thy power, add liberally the temporal things, if the sick man be situated in poor circumstances.

O, My son, if thou do these things, thou shalt be a man of mercy: I will exalt thee in the Church of My people, because I was sick and thou visitedst Me.

CHAPTER LXI.

OF LOVING-KINDNESS TOWARDS ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I am pitiful and full of mercy, My son; long-suffering, and very merciful; kind unto all: and My mercies are over all My works.

O, My son, I came not to destroy souls, but to save them; and in saving them, I used not the sword, but loving-kindness.

My cords were the cords of a man, the bonds of love; My burden is light, and My yoke is easy.

Dost thou wish, My son —dost thou wish to attract souls? Dost thou wish to bind them unto Me? Show unto them loving-kindness, show unto them charity.

Love is as strong as death; it overcometh all things, it subdueth the most refractory.

Let thy flock perceive that, out of a pure desire for their salvation, out of a maternal mind, thou dost all things for them; and they will, of their own accord, give themselves unto thee.

2. Oh! If, with the affection of Paul, thou wouldst say unto them: "God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

"O children! our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels: I speak as unto my children, be ye also enlarged.

"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you: who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?

If thou wouldest say, from thine heart, such things as these unto thy sheep, oh! how they would incline their ears! How they would open their hearts! How they would receive thine admonitions! How they would keep thine injunctions! How they would run after thee in My ways!

Those are verily teachers in reality that, by the strictness of their discipline, are fathers, and yet, by the bowels of compassion, know how to be mothers also.

3. Be thou, therefore, My son, a gentle mother of My sheep, not with feigned speeches, but in sincerity of heart, and by the exhibition of good works.

I have gone before, doing good and healing all: follow thou Me, My son.

If thou perceive any sheep groaning under the burden of poverty or misfortune, to the very best of thy power take his burden on thy shoulders, and lighten it with alms-deeds and kindness.

If thou find him sick and comfortless under the pressure of his sickness, raise him up by thine aid, assist him with advice, cherish him with thy consolation.

If any come unto thee bent down under the yoke of sins, even as the father

of the prodigal son, fall upon his neck, gently take up the lost sheep, and wash him with the tears of mildness.

If he come disheartened, rouse him by the incentives of pleasing admonition: if thou find him rebellious and hard-hearted, bear him with patience; and do thou, who art the stronger, bear the infirmities of this weak one.

Bear the contradictions of thy sheep with evenness of temper.

Do not lose courage if, when thou hast sown wheat, thou reap thorns: I, My son, even from the Manger to the Cross, ceased not to labour for the salvation of souls; and yet few there are that be saved.

4. Be not desirous of rooting out all vices immediately; a zeal over-violent in cutting off vices rather exasperates men's minds, and confirms them in the evil.

Certain there are rather to be gently dissuaded, than violently to be torn away; some to be borne with for a time and to be concealed.

Some minds should be tried with a pious stratagem, rather than be uselessly covered with the shame of a strict correction.

Rightly saith one of S. Peter's successors, The Holy Church correcteth some things with eagerness, some she beareth with gentleness, some she hideth and beareth with consideration; so that she may, by suffering and by concealing, repress that evil which she hateth.

At all times, then, have a care first to possess the hearts of thy flock by means of kindness, before thou correct them by means of discipline.

CHAPTER LXII.

OF STRENGTH OF MIND.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Son, thou hast received the Holy Spirit for strength. Be not, therefore, faint-hearted.

Be of good cheer, then, and fear not; be strong in war, and fight manfully.

Even though thou be weak, remember that I have

chosen thee, that by thee I may confound the strong.

Although they be of a stiff neck whom thou art bound to subdue, remember that I have given unto thee a face harder than their face.

Even though all the world be armed against thee, yet fear not with sudden terror: I, Who have overcome the world, am with thee, even as a strong warrior: wherefore, they shall fall and shall be weak.

2. Therefore, My son, if now thou art called by Me to govern men's souls—if now thou art rightfully set over My sheep—forget not My command, distrust not My promise.

Look to what vices are creeping in, what evils thou oughtest to put to flight, what good things to perceive: and when thou hast prudently perceived the means by which thou canst effect these things, then up, and be doing.

Say boldly unto kings themselves, It is not lawful: say unto a wicked prince, Thou art the man: say unto a wicked man of high estate, Woe be unto thee! thou shalt die: I will pass by, and thou shalt be away.

Say unto those that ask of thee unlawful things, I must obey GOD, rather than men.

Say unto those that regard not thy speech, Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! Behold, I shake off the dust of my feet for a testimony against you.

Say unto the hypocrites, Woe unto you, ye whited walls! The LORD shall smite you.

Say unto those that fear not unworthily to approach My Table, Depart, ye dogs: it is not lawful for me to give the Holy Thing unto dogs.

Send out thine arrows and thy lightnings, so that thou mayest put to flight all iniquities.

Crush the pride of the powerful: subdue the avarice of the rich: blot out the corruption of the unclean.

Break the animosities of the enemy: diminish the wrath of the angry: thunder against the pleasures of the carnal.

Put a stop to the dances and the lusts of the young: take away impious or lewd books: repress scurrilous songs: cut off blasphemies.

3. Doubtless, thou wilt

be regarded as an enemy for speaking the truth—no doubt, Satan will raise up persecutions against thee—but thou art not above Me, My son; if they persecuted Me, they will persecute thee also.

Thou mayest, indeed, by silence and by bearing, keep thyself from persecution: thus, in truth, thou mayest please men; but thou wouldest not be a servant of CHRIST.

Remember that He, Whose servant thou art, came not to bring peace, but a sword.

Be not slothful, therefore; fold not thy hands. Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD, and spare not.

4. And if they put thee out of the synagogues; and if the hour come in which they shall desire to kill thee, saying:

This man seeketh not the peace of the people, but their misfortune: come, let us take him: let us put out his name from off the earth: we shall do GOD service, if we put him to death:

Do thou, My son, in the mean time, abide undaunted: stand thou before kings and princes; and in their presence, and in prison, and in torment, and in death, show thyself to be resolute: thou wilt show then that a true priest may be slain, but he cannot be overcome.

5. My son, thou canst do all things in Me, Who strengthen thee.

Peter, left to himself, at the voice of a maid, denied Me: Peter, aided by Me, manfully endured the death of the Cross.

Be not afraid, then, saying, I am a man: how can I endure such things?

Know, My son, that at that hour thou shalt not be sustained by thyself, but My Spirit shall sustain thee.

Say, then: Verily, LORD, if it be needful, I will give my life for my sheep.

I know, O my GOD, that Thou dost not command impossible things; but when Thou dost command, Thou givest help, that we may be able to do what Thou commandest.

Thou, O LORD, hast promised, and Thou wilt perform: Thou wilt make speed to save me: Thou wilt make haste to help me.

I know in Whom I have believed, and I am of good cheer. Verily, I will fulfil my ministry: I will fear no evil, for Thou wilt be with me.

6. Such firmness of purpose becometh My soldier, My son.

Be of good cheer, be of good cheer: put far from thee the indifference of the indolent Eli.

Do not merely observe what is evil, and mourn timidly over it: do not too moderately rebuke, saying, My sons, it is no good thing this that ye do.

Do not correct with too great gentleness, fearing lest they be angry, and rise up against thee. Rebuke, My son, rebuke the hardened with hardness.

Be of good cheer, be of good cheer: do not fear, lest the report of thy burning zeal bring against thee the censure and reproach of idle priests. Not unto them, but unto Me, thou wilt have to render an account.

Fear not, fear not: look not behind thee either to the right hand or to the left.

Say not: What will they think, what will they say, if I oppose this evil, if I require this good? Look only to what thou hast to do. Seek for counsel of the wise, and then be doing.

Nevertheless, remember that thou oughtest to be a father, not a tyrant; a shepherd, not a wolf; a physician, not a murderer.

Remember, then, gentleness and goodness even in the needful earnestness of zeal: do not root out rather than water: scatter not rather than nourish: kill not rather than heal: beware, lest, when thou takest up the tares, thou root up the wheat also.

Act with prudence, therefore, My son: but beware of the prudence of the flesh, which is at enmity with GOD.

CHAPTER LXIII.

OF PRUDENCE AND SIMPLICITY.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Be thou wise as a serpent, and harmless as a dove: behold, My son, thine arms! by these thou shalt get the victory.

By holiness, thou shalt save thyself: by prudence

and simplicity, thou shalt make others holy.

By prudence, thy zeal is as a fire constantly burning; and without prudence, it becometh a whirlwind, breaking all things.

By prudence, gentleness becometh a healing ointment: without prudence, it is as a corrupting poison.

By prudence, the eloquence of the preacher is as piercing darts: without prudence, it is as words flying in the air.

By prudence, thou wilt do all things profitably: without prudence, thou wilt do almost all things in vain.

By prudence, thou wilt wisely honour the powerful, and, by honouring them, wilt edify them: without prudence, thou wilt either be their servant, or thou wilt offend them, and thus wilt thou make them thine enemies, and deeply injurious to thy holy ministry.

By prudence, thou wilt, as far as possible, please all: without prudence, either, by too great familiarity, thou wilt cause the little ones to offend, or else thou wilt drive from thee sinners by thy too stern severity.

By prudence, thou wilt bring honour upon thy ministry: without prudence, thou wilt cause either weariness by thy prolixity, or indevotion by thy too great haste.

By prudence, thou wilt happily draw out the poison from the hearts of those who confess unto thee, and thou wilt sweetly sow the seed of righteousness in their minds: but without prudence, thou wilt shut up the hearts of penitents, and wilt cause a disgust in their minds.

By prudence, thy flock will be wonderfully directed and ordered: without prudence, they will be scattered, or remain in confusion.

2. O son! Ask for prudence from Me; it is better than all the most precious things, and there is nothing which can be desired at all in comparison with it.

Seek for this wisdom that standeth by My Throne, that she may direct thee in all thy ways.

Seek for her from the wise, and buy her for thyself: go unto Ananias: constantly take counsel from the wise: he will tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

Thou oughtest not, My son, easily to trust thyself: scanty is the light that is in thee: sometimes thou art moved by passion, which thou thinkest to be zeal.

Seek, therefore, rather to be instructed by a man of good conscience, than to follow thine own inventions.

3. Be thou simple: in all things show thyself candid and open: act without dissimulation, speak without guile.

Believe Me, simplicity is more powerful than any craftiness and any contrivances.

Call the sheep from the heart, and not with the mouth alone, and they will come at thy call.

Rebuke sinners out of sorrow and compassion, not of heat and violence: then they will weep; then they will be converted.

Arouse the faint-hearted, not as if thou wert their master, but as an eagle teacheth her young ones to fly, and they will go and will run.

The Voice of the Disciple.

4. O blessed simplicity! that proceedest out of a good heart, and soothest the hearts both of them that hear and them that behold: come and rule thou in all my actions.

By this will I please Thee, O my God, Who lovest the upright in heart, and art pleased with the goodness of a sincere mind.

By this will I please men, unto whom, by this, I will give a father's heart.

CHAPTER LXIV.

OF GENTLENESS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, fulfil thy ministry in gentleness, and thou shalt be loved above the praise of men.

I am the Lamb of God: be thou My disciple, even as I am thy Master.

I sent out My Apostles as sheep amongst wolves. And even as, by the gentleness of a dying Lamb, I

overcame death and hell, so, by the gentleness of sheep, did My Apostles overcome the world.

A gentle pastor I will direct, I am the LORD. A meek pastor I will teach My ways. Even as I was with Moses, whom I made a saint in gentleness, so will I be with him. Through him will My sheep hear My Voice; they shall be saved together, the sheep and the shepherd.

2. Be thou, therefore, My son, a pastor gracious and gentle. That thy ministry be blameless, be thou gentle unto all.

With the same heart and mind, lovingly receive the noble and the ignoble, the rich and the poor: give them counsel and assistance: the importunate treat not with severity, but with kindness.

Them that came unto Me I thrust not away, but received them with mercy, and loaded them with blessings. I received little children: the multitudes that importunately crowded upon Me I taught: the afflicted and the poor I comforted: I visited the sick, and healed them: I refused not the kiss of the traitor.

Learn from Me to have bowels of mercy, kindness, humility, modesty, patience.

Look upon no one more sadly than is necessary: utter not a single word too hardly: him that is in tribulation, make not sad by too sharp an answer: be not angry with him that injureth thee: refuse not to forgive thine adversary: overcome evil with good.

Suffer all things, bear all things, hurt no one: beware of disputes, beware of contentions.

Them that are set over thee in all things, promptly and faithfully obey: never retain any rebellious or disobedient feeling in thine heart. For the gentle servant of GOD knoweth not how to resist: as the clay in the hand of the potter, he never saith, Why makest thou me thus?

3. Admire, My son, and imitate the gentleness of Saint Martin. No man ever beheld him angry, nor sad, nor foolishly laughing: he was always one and the same—always wearing on his countenance a heavenly joy.

So great was the patience which he had acquired under all injuries, that, with impunity, the lowest of the clergy attacked him; nor,

on that account, did he ever either remove them from their position, or reject them from his love.

Never, in his heart, was there aught but CHRIST; never, in his heart, aught but piety, and peace, and mercy. Constantly was he wont, also, to weep for the sins of those who were his disparagers.

Behold, too, My son, S. Francis de Sales: most sweetly did he become all things unto all men, that he might gain all. Behold, and imitate.

4. And yet forget not, My son, that thou art the leader and governor of My flock.

It is thy duty not only to cherish the sheep, but also to have a care for them, and therefore sometimes to correct and rebuke them.

Beware, then, that thou be neither so gentle as to lose the laws of a strict rule, nor so strict as to throw away all the gentleness of loving-kindness.

Observe both gentleness and discipline, so that thou be neither proof against the compassion of mercy when thou correctest the refractory, nor yet take away the edge of discipline when thou art comforting weak souls.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O LORD, that art goodness itself, and gentleness! How fair art Thou, my Beloved, and how beautiful!

Show Thy Face unto me: let me look upon the mercy of Thy Face, the sweetness of Thine Eyes, the suavity of Thy lips, the kindness of Thine Hands, the fairness of Thy Footsteps; and, above all these, the exceeding love of Thy Heart.

Let me look on Thee, the GOD of gods; may I ever have Thee before my eyes; so that, possessed with Thine infinite loveliness, I may put on and imitate Thy loving-kindness.

CHAPTER LXV.

OF PATIENCE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. It behoved Me, My son, to suffer, and so to enter into My glory.

Wherefore, I was always prepared for stripes: wherefore, I was in labours from My youth up: wherefore, I was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

And thee, also, My son, it behoveth, through much tribulation, to enter into My kingdom.

Wherefore, I have said unto thee, My son, Dost thou wish to come after Me? Take up thy Cross.

Verily, My son, it all consisteth in the Cross; and if there had been any better way than suffering, that, indeed, I would have shown unto thee both by works and by words.

Wherefore, thou hast need of patience, that, after thou hast done the will of My Father, thou mayest receive the promise.

Run, therefore, with patience, the race that is set before thee.

If, therefore, thou wert only a Christian, I should say unto thee, Take, My son, the shield of patience, and keep it ever with thee.

In truth, the life of a Christian, if he live according to the Gospel, is a Cross and a martyrdom.

But thou art a priest, the leader of those who are bound to live on this Cross and in this martyrdom. How much more, then, is patience needful unto thee?

Without this, how wilt thou stir up My sheep to bear evils, and to do violence unto themselves? Without this, how wilt thou bear the labours, the anguish, the toil, the adversities of the sacred ministry?

Without this, how wilt thou fight against the world and the devil? Without this, how wilt thou stand against the powers of the wicked that assail thee?

Without this, certainly thou wilt not go forward, thou wilt fail; thou wilt not overcome, thou wilt be beaten.

Without this, thy piety

will soon grow lukewarm, thy zeal will grow cold; thou wilt abide in good only for a short time, like a vapour, that appeareth for a little, and is dissipated soon by anything that opposeth it.

Without this, thou wilt put thine hand to the plough, indeed, but thou wilt look back, and henceforth thou wilt not be fit for the kingdom of GOD.

3. But, by patience, thou wilt be made like unto Me crucified: by this, thou wilt always abide subject to My Will: thou wilt always do the things that are well-pleasing unto Me.

By this, thou wilt wonderfully make amends for thy sins: by this, thou wilt become strong against temptations.

By this, thou wilt be My true servant, better than a brave man, and one that taketh a city: in dangers, fearless; in persecutions, unmoved.

The wicked shall laugh at thee, and thou shalt not be confounded: they shall war against thee, and thou shalt prevail.

4. O, My son, remember that there is no tribulation that I have not sent.

Whatever tribulation, therefore, may assail thee, bear it patiently, just as if thou sawest thy Heavenly FATHER chastising thee with His own Hand.

It may be, that sometimes thy weak nature will groan: that is a human infirmity: but it is not lawful for thee to murmur.

My son, still bear on manfully, with absolute resignation, indeed, and total indifference: so that in thine heart thou care not for, nor desire, prosperity more than adversity: abundance, more than want: health, more than sickness: peace, more than persecution; saying, in all things, O LORD, my heart is ready: LORD, what wouldest Thou have me to do?

Well done, good servant: suffer still more perfectly—suffer with gladness; thinking it all joy, when thou fallest into divers temptations.

Knowing this, that the trying of thy faith worketh patience; but patience hath its perfect work.

Knowing that the more thou hast to suffer, so much the more surely wilt thou come unto My kingdom.

5. Behold, My son, the true way that leadeth unto life, the door by which there

is an entrance into the city that is above.

Narrow is the way, thou wilt say, and strait is the gate! Hard word! But surely it will be much more hard to hear that last word, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire.

Hard is the word, My son! If the labour frighten, the reward inviteth. The light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Hard is the word, My son! But I kept it before thee. Behold how, hanging on the Cross, I opened not My mouth.

Hard word! But yet My Saints have kept it.

Behold the Apostles and Martyrs, so many holy prelates, so many priests: behold how great things they suffered, how strongly they were tried, how grievously afflicted, in how many ways proved and tempted.

Follow, My son, this cloud of witnesses that encompasseth thee; knowing that, if thou refuse to suffer with them, thou refusest also to be crowned with them.

Hard word! But what will not courtiers—what will not speculators suffer for the world, and for temporal gain? for empty glory, what will not warriors suffer? for wickedness itself what will not the wicked suffer?

Rival them, My son, rival them, and blush not to suffer for heaven, whilst these thus suffer for the nothingness of vanity.

The Voice of the Disciple.

6. O Lord, Thy will be done. Here burn, here cut: I am ready.

But Thou knowest, O my God, my spirit is ready, but my flesh is weak.

If tribulation increase above measure, if it last long, how shall I bear it?

The Voice of the Beloved.

7. O son! Am not I thy Father? Am not I faithful?

Assuredly, I will not suffer thee to be tempted above that thou art able: but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that thou mayest be able to bear it.

Pray, My son, and suffer: without doubt, thou shalt see My assistance come unto thee at its own time.

I know the time and the way of aiding and of freeing thee. Fear not, therefore, to resign thyself wholly unto Me.

If the tribulation last long, sayest thou? O son, so long as My grace be not wanting unto thee, why carest thou, why fearest thou?

Is not that light and short which passeth away with time? What is this, compared with eternity? Wait a while, and thou shalt quickly see an end.

CHAPTER LXVI.

OF THE FAITHFUL PERFORMANCE OF THE WILL OF GOD.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I, My son, was sent by the FATHER, and came down from heaven, not to do My own Will, but the Will of My FATHER: as long as I abode on the earth, I ever did what was well-pleasing unto Him.

In this I wished to give thee an example, that thou mightest do likewise.

As My FATHER sent Me, even so did I send thee; namely, that thou shouldest worship My FATHER in spirit and in truth: that thou shouldest be His faithful servant, and My minister—as attached to Me as a brother, and as a sister.

But who is he that is a worshipper of My FATHER in spirit and in truth, unless it be he that doeth His Will?

Who is he that is His faithful servant, except it be he that diligently followeth out those things that be well-pleasing unto Him?

Who is he that is My true minister, who is attached to Me as a brother and as a sister, except it be he that in all things striveth to fulfil My Will?

2. Would the fathers of this world consider those as good children that walk not after their will? Would masters esteem those servants faithful that obey not their commands? Would princes look upon those as real subjects or good servants that despise their will, or that care not to act according to what they prescribe?

Assuredly not: but they would look upon them as bad children, as wicked servants, as rebels, as enemies, how much soever, in other respects, they might protest

their obedience, their affection, and devotion.

No matter, then, how much, in other respects, a priest should think and boast that he is faithful and devoted unto GOD—no matter how much, by prayers, confessions, celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, almsdeeds, austerities, exercises of his holy ministry, he may wish to show himself a servant of GOD:

If, besides all this, he strive not to do His Will, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

Wherefore I have declared: Not every one that saith unto Me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the Will of My FATHER that is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again: many shall come and shall say, LORD, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and taught and wrought many miracles? And I will answer them, I know you not: depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity.

And wherefore? Because they walked after their own heart: because they did not My Will, but their own will.

It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that thou endeavour diligently to perform the Will of thy FATHER that is in heaven.

3. But know, My son, that not only in those things which are commanded thee by GOD, or by the Laws and Canons of His Church, or by the bishop are taught and prescribed, is the Will of GOD towards thee terminated; but that it extends to those things which affect thyself, whether they be prosperous or the contrary.

Let it not, then, be sufficient for thee to keep the commandments, the precepts, the laws and rules; but do thy diligence to be prepared, also, for all those things which are sent unto thee by GOD, and to be content with those things which befall thee at His gentle disposal.

So that He may always behold thee in His Hands as clay in the hands of the potter; and thou mayest be equally subdued and submissive, whether He will to make thee a vessel for honour or for dishonour.

4. Is not GOD very good, My son? Is He not, also, very wise? Why, then, shouldst thou hesitate to

resign thyself perfectly unto Him—to commit thyself absolutely unto Him?

Assuredly, since He is very good, whatever He may do unto thee cannot be otherwise than good; and, since He is very wise, surely He will know how to turn into good whatever evil may happen unto thee.

Say thou, therefore, Let the LORD do with me according to His knowledge and His Will. Behold, I am in His Hands, and so I wish always to abide.

And if thou wilt so resign thyself, beloved, what peace of mind wilt thou have!

Thou wilt live without any anxiety, thou wilt fear nothing whatever in this world but sin, and thou wilt be free from every danger.

Neither will life bring thee bitterness, nor death itself sadness; but in all things, even as holy Job, thou wilt say with submission, Even as the LORD pleased, so hath it fallen out, blessed be the Name of the LORD. Thou wilt be a man, verily, after GOD'S heart.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. Behold, O LORD, I know that I cannot be perfectly Thine, nor canst Thou, O good GOD, be mine, except I be entirely, within and without, stript of my own will, and entirely subdued and resigned unto Thy Will.

I know that the sooner I shall do this, so much the better shall I be: and the more fully and sincerely, so much the more fully shall I please Thee, and the more shall I be profited.

Behold, O LORD, fully and faithfully do I place myself altogether, and all my fortunes, in Thy Hands: that which shall please Thee, that shall come to pass.

Do with me as Thou knowest best, and place me where Thou willest: act freely with me in all things: turn me this way and that again and again.

If Thou willest that I be afflicted, blessed be Thou: and if Thou willest that I be comforted, still blessed be Thou again.

If thou willest that I be in darkness, blessed be Thou: and if Thou willest that I be in the light, again equally blessed be Thou.

Thou knowest what is good for me, and greater is Thy care for me, than all the care that I can take for

myself: wherefore whatsoever Thou mayest do with me, cannot be otherwise than good.

My heart is ready, O LORD, as well to suffer as to rejoice: ready for sickness, as well as health: ready for poverty and want, as well as for fulness and riches.

I desire to receive with indifference from Thy Hand good and evil, the sweet and the bitter, joy and sadness, and for all that happeneth unto me to return Thee thanks: for I wish not to live for myself, but for Thee.

6. To will, indeed, is present with me, O LORD, but how to perform I find not; except Thou give me Thy grace, that it may be with me, and abide with me even unto the end.

I beseech Thee, O LORD, give unto Thy servant this bread, so needful unto me. Grant that by Thy grace even as I wish so in deed and in truth Thy will may be my will, and my will may ever follow Thine, and most perfectly agree with it.

CHAPTER LXVII.

OF CAUSING SCANDAL.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Woe be unto that man by whom the offence cometh! It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. What vengeance, then, My son, doth there hang over a priest that giveth occasion of offence.

How shall he be punished who, whereas from his office he ought to tell of My righteousness, to amend sinners, and to prepare a perfect people, yet putteth stumbling-blocks in the way of their mother the Church—in the way of My sheep.

There shall come, My son, a day of wrath, a great day, and one very bitter. Then shall My angels gather together all offences, shall cast them into the fiery furnace, and the of-

fences of priests they shall cast into the depth of the furnace. O ye priests! Woe be unto the world because of your offences! But yet greater woe be unto your offences by reason of My wrath.

2. Verily, My son, the wickedness of a priest that causeth offences is greater than that of Sodom, which was destroyed in a moment.

Listen how such a wicked one plotteth against Me, how he rebelleth against Me. I set him over My people, saying, Have a care that they worship Me, and serve Me only.

But he, by his example, turneth aside My servants from the obedience they owe Me: he maketh them desert My army, and he enrolleth them in that of the devil.

Hence is the army of Satan, My enemy, increased: and he relying on his numbers, ariseth and fighteth the more boldly against Me.

Yea verily, that perfidious priest gathereth together with him against CHRIST My SON; he teareth away His triumphs, and treadeth down His victory.

JESUS cast out the prince of the world: but the wicked priest maketh the prince of the world to reign over them whom he draweth into sin by his offences.

JESUS made His Church unspotted, washing It with His Blood; the members of that Church, by his offences, the wicked priest harasseth and corrupteth.

And not yet is there an end. The offence of a priest causeth reproach, and wageth war, even upon the grace of the Holy Spirit.

I poured out this Comforter upon the sons of My adoption, that He might abide with them, but they, copying the sins of the priest, reject and cast out that Holy Spirit by their wickedness which cometh upon them: for that He cannot abide in a body subject unto sin.

Behold how he, that ought to cherish the fire of My Spirit in their hearts, extinguisheth that fire by his offences.

O most wicked priest! Woe unto thee, by whose offences such evils come!

3. Woe unto thee that ministerest at My Altar without reverence and piety! Thou leadest My sheep to irreverence, to incredulity, to impiety.

Woe unto thee that art miserly, and art desirous of

heaping up money! Thou leadest My sheep to despise the sacred ministry, and dost make them persevere in their covetousness, when they are already given to idols.

Woe unto thee that art quarrelsome without necessity! Thou inducest My sheep to be contentious and quarrelsome.

Woe unto thee that cherishest hatreds and enmities in thy heart, and openly also! By thy example, thou overturnest the precept of holy charity, and thou keepest those that are at enmity still in their animosity.

Woe unto thee that art proud and given to vanity! By thy way of acting, thou destroyest holy humility and modesty, and excitest My sheep to be fond of dangerous vanities.

Woe unto thee that art looked upon as a man fond of feasts! As far as in thee lieth, thou overturnest the law of penitence by thy deeds: and thou justifiest, in their excesses, drunkards, and all those who live after the flesh.

Woe unto thee that art angry with them that offend thee! That art not afraid to load them with harsh sayings and with curses! Thou drivest away from My sheep patience and meekness: thou inducest parents and masters to be wroth with their children and servants: and thou confirmest the wicked in their anger, and in the use of bad language.

Woe unto thee that from morning to night givest thyself up to unlawful hunting and games of chance, and thus teachest that time may be uselessly spent, and that, in this life, a man may be employed in pleasure without intermission!

Woe unto thee that art unkind towards thy relations. Thou destroyest the affection and reverence of sons: thou encouragest in them a rebellious and bold spirit.

Woe unto thee that hast no care for thy domestics: that dost not rebuke their faults, and dost not check them! By this, thou encouragest carelessness in masters, and dissolute habits in servants.

4. O, My son! Far be it from thee to cause any of My sheep to offend! Yea, beware, lest thou cause even one of the least of My little ones to offend! I say not by any real sin, but even by any shadow of sin!

Verily, My son, if this or that kind of lawful food cause thy brother to offend, then eat not of that food for ever.

Thou hast, indeed, the power to eat and to drink; but if, under certain circumstances, or in certain company, by eating and drinking thou offend the conscience of the weak, do it not: thou wouldest, by doing it, sin against CHRIST.

Thou hast the power of exacting those things which are thy due, of demanding thy just rights: but if, under certain circumstances, by so doing thou offend the conscience of the weak, do it not: thou sinnest against CHRIST.

Thou hast the power of being cheerful with thy friends: but if such or such an amusement offend the conscience of a weak brother, do it not: thou sinnest against CHRIST.

Thou hast the power of telling this or that story, of speaking thus or thus: but if, under such circumstances, the narration or the speech can, by an appearance either of hatred, or detraction, or of any vice whatever, offend the conscience of any weak brother, do it not: thou sinnest against CHRIST.

Thou hast the power of sending away an idle or dissolute beggar without alms: but if, in doing this, thou offend the conscience of any weak brother by an appearance of unkindness, do it not: thou sinnest against CHRIST.

Thou hast the power of rebuking, with severity, such or such a sinner who is hardened and intractable: but if by doing this in the presence of any weak brother thou offend his conscience by an appearance of anger, do it not: wait for another opportunity.

In the church there may be performed, perhaps, some services at which thou art not bound to be present; but if the people assemble, and thy absence would offend the conscience of the weak, then be present: if thou wert to be absent, and so wert to offend thy brother, thou wouldest sin against CHRIST.

5. Be thou, therefore, in all things, wise as a serpent, lest thou cause one of the little ones to offend.

Be diligent, on the contrary, that in all things thou mayest be the example of the faithful—in word, in

conversation, in love, in faith, in chastity.

Be instant in these things; for so doing, thou wilt both save thyself, and those, also, that see thee.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

OF THE TONGUE, AND OF LANGUAGE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.

And thou, My son, if thou seem to be religious, and yet bridlest not thy tongue, thou deceivest thy heart, and thy religion is vain.

Thy mouth is the temple of GOD, the sanctuary of His CHRIST.

Thy throat is a fountain of blessing, intended for praises, for invocations, for pouring forth thanks, for preaching the Word of GOD.

Thy tongue is a holy root, fitted for grace from the FATHER of lights, to spring up through holy words.

That be far from thee, My son, that with the same thing thou shouldest bless GOD and the FATHER, and curse men.

That be far from thee, that out of the same fountain there should flow forth in turn sweet water and bitter, blessing and cursing.

Men put bits in the horses' mouths that they may obey them, and they turn about their whole body.

Sailors, by a very small helm, turn about great ships whithersoever the governor listeth.

Pastors of souls, by holy addresses, know how to draw their sheep from evil, and to lead to good.

But the tongue, which is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, what priest knoweth how to tame rightly?

3. To the heart, My son, go to the heart. Enter into its chambers and shut the door, and think over thy speeches: diligently consider thy tongue.

See whether it be wise, chaste, peaceful, modest, easy to be entreated, consenting unto good, full of mercy

and good fruits, judging without dissimulation.

4. Thou, dearly beloved, —thou indeed, abhorrest the wickedness of the tongue: thou abominatest contumelies, injurious talk, detractions, calumnies, blasphemies, cursings, foul discourse.

But dost thou not offend in many other things? Art thou not constantly transgressing with thy tongue?

Yea, thy tongue is not as an arrow that woundeth sharp like a serpent's:

But still, perhaps, it sometimes injureth the anointed ones of GOD—thy superiors —by murmuring, by blaming, by condemning.

Perhaps thou art not silent about the faults of thy brethren, as is fitting, and dost not conceal them: nay, rather, perhaps, when an opportunity occurs, thou incautiously exposest them and talkest of them; or, at least, maliciously or foolishly discussest those which are already known.

Perhaps thou discoverest without cause the errors and the faults of thy sheep which, as being their pastor, thou knowest, and which as their father, thou oughtest to keep secret, except from some great necessity.

Perhaps under a pretence of cheerfulness and of joking, thou teasest and vexest thy companions beyond measure, and sometimes givest them a cause for shame, or sometimes even for anger: and so, by small sparks, thou sometimes lightest up great fires.

Perhaps, by reason of some secret envy of heart, or some jealousy by thy words, thou disparagest, makest of slight account, and triest to hide the endeavours of others, their labours, and good success.

Perhaps, by flattering, thou confirmest the evil in evil; or, by laughing at him, turnest away the good from perfection.

Perhaps thou speakest over-harshly to thy sheep, to thy friends, to thy workmen, to thy domestics, or thou blamest them without reason, and out of due measure: and so thou art said to be passionate, cruel, and unacquainted with the gentleness that becometh a priest.

5. Yea, the secrecy of thy clerical profession thou dost not ever mean to violate: and art rather ready to die than to do so:

And yet, perhaps thou speakest too lightly of the sacred ministry and of pe-

nitents, and, by the way, sayest many things in general which may be interpreted of this or that one—may be applied to such or such a person:

And so thou art accounted indiscreet: and so they who come to thee for advice do so with less trust and confidence.

6. Yea, thou art chaste, and wouldest not that any really unclean speech should proceed out of thy mouth: and yet, perhaps, by trifling, by vain laughter, thou utterest some words which go beyond the limits of strict decency and modesty.

And so they say that thou art light—not sufficiently tenacious of priestly gravity; and they even suspect that thou art not in heart really and perfectly an enemy to uncleanness.

7. Yea, thou hadst rather that thy tongue should cleave to the roof of thy mouth, than that it should utter real blasphemies, and speak positive oaths:

And yet, perhaps, there are familiar to thee certain vulgar words which are near akin to blasphemies and oaths, and which are wont to be used by men not over-pious, and not over-anxious about their salvation;

And so many are offended, and say that thou speakest more like a soldier than a priest.

8. Yea, thou deeply reverencest religion and all its sacred mysteries:

And yet, perhaps, thou minglest the words of Holy Scripture with trifles and vanities, or other profane talk, which assuredly is injurious to the Word of God.

9. Yea, thou hatest a lying tongue: thou abhorrest great and hurtful falsehoods:

And yet, on any occasion that may occur, art not afraid to devise deceptions in little things.

Dost thou not acknowledge thyself guilty of many of these faults? Verily, thou darest not to answer; I cannot accuse my conscience of anything of the kind.

10. Set, then, from henceforth, a stricter watch over thy mouth, and a door of great caution before thy lips; so that thou fall not, and thy tongue destroy thee not.

Wherefore, keep thyself, I command thee, in the fear of God: remembering that, for every idle word, thou must give an account unto Him.

And be not too free-spoken: for, by reason of lightness of heart, thou hast often fallen into such-like faults.

Perhaps thou art bound by habit; but strive manfully. By one habit another habit is overcome.

Avoid, as far as possible, the noisy assembly of men: for in such a handle is quickly given for new slips of the tongue.

Watch earnestly: for negligence hath much to do with incautiousness of speech.

Speak not much: for in much speaking sin will not be wanting: and it is easier to be altogether silent, than not to say a word too much.

Believe Me, My son, how bright soever thy fame may be, yet thou wilt soon displease, if thou use too many words.

Observe a good and peaceable manner. Be silent about others: believe not everything without discrimination: mix not up thyself with the affairs of thy superiors.

Do not, except from necessity, observe what others do, or what they ought to do: but attend to thine own obligations, and be zealous, first of all, about thyself.

When it is expedient to speak, have a care to speak good things, and which tend unto edification.

When thou art bound to answer, have a care that thy speech be always with grace, and with the salt of wisdom. This observe, My son, and thou wilt tame thy tongue.

CHAPTER LXIX.

OF CHASTITY.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, My son, behold, Satan desireth to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat.

He seeketh to devour all men, but above all, My priests; they are his choice food.

He tempteth all men, but above all, My priests; because, if they sin, greater is the injury done unto Me, greater is the loss that hangeth over My Church, greater the offence given unto My people.

He striveth to induce

priests to commit all kinds of vices, but especially those that are opposed to chastity; because they are the more grievous, the more foul, the more infamous, the more sacrilegious.

Watch, therefore, My son, lest a thief come and take from thee that treasure which thou bearest in an earthen vessel.

Keep thyself pure: let all uncleanness, and filthiness, and jesting be not once named by thee, as becometh a saint.

2. Let dogs and immodest persons be turned out of My Sanctuary.

A priest is consecrated unto Me—he is My holy one: he shall not see corruption.

He consecrateth the Sacrament of My Body, he handleth It: he taketh It: therefore shall he be without spot: he shall preserve purity of heart and body.

If he be impure and immodest, he polluteth My Sanctuary, he defileth My Body: he maketh himself, above all others, guilty of My Body and Blood—more than all others doth he eat and drink to himself damnation.

Of old time, he that despised Moses' law died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment, supposest thou, shall he be thought worthy who hath thus trodden Me under foot?

3. The proud, the ambitious, the covetous, the passionate, him that denied Me—yea, even the traitor—I patiently suffered to be amongst My Apostles: but a mark of impurity amongst them I suffered not. This sin is, beyond all others, hateful unto Me.

My son, My son, My Spirit will not remain in thee, if thou art carnal: I will blot thee out from before Me, if thou corrupt thy way.

Sodom and Gomorrah are examples of the fire prepared for thee for ever, if thou permit thy heart to burn with impure flames.

4. But what art thou, My son? Thou art said to be a saint, thou art considered as one strong in righteousness, thou art called wise; but what art thou in heart?—in thy inmost mind? What hast thou done in secret?

Chastity is easily lost, except the very strictest watch be kept for its preservation.

Thou, therefore, how dost

thou act in temptation? Dost thou drive away thoughts, dost thou repress desires?

Hast thou made a covenant with thine eyes that thou wilt not think upon a maid? Dost thou not, on the contrary, freely look upon persons of the other sex, and art in danger of stumbling, by reason of their beauty?

Dost thou keep thyself from the society and conversation of impure persons?

5. What of thy household arrangements? Doth any woman serve thee from whom thou art in danger?

Is she too young, and below the holy and prudent age? Oh! there is danger.

If thou fear it not, thou shalt perish in it.

How wilt thou continue chaste, except there be constantly between thee and thy female servants the partition of God's presence, of holy fear, and of most careful vigilance: except a holy modesty always direct all thy looks, words, and actions: except thy religious authority restrain thy servants always within a becoming gravity, and put down useless conversations with them.

O son! look to thyself: David fell, and Samson, and Solomon.

And what besides, My son, of those maidens and younger widows that are under thy spiritual guidance? Under an appearance of piety and instruction, doth there lie hidden the poison of familiarity and of love?

Fear, fear: thou art not holier, nor stronger, nor wiser than those who have already fallen: fear the solicitation of sin: fear the very whisper of lust: fear the fuel of this pestilence.

6. If thy conscience accuse thee not, My son, then, from thy heart, return thanks unto Me, for no man can be continent except I give him the gift.

But if thy heart accuse thee, then weep bitterly, and let abundance of tears water thy cheeks.

Grieve, and be confounded: let the measure of the greatness of thy fall be that of thy repentance. Return unto thy father; he will mercifully receive thee, if thou be of a contrite heart.

Arise, arise without delay: cast away the idol from thee.

Here is work, here is toil, thou wilt say, My son:

but the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. Verily, I say unto thee, thou wilt not put out the flames, except thou take away the fire.

7. But I warn thee, My son: that old serpent, that is called Satan, will endeavour by various means to hinder this: he will contend with thee craftily, so that he may deceive thee, and keep thee in this danger of falling.

Verily, he will say: Be careful: sin no more. But this woman is needful to thee: if thou send her away, a great source of help will be gone, who will supply it?

And then what will be said of thee? Thou hast a name that thou livest, and shortly thou shalt be called dead. Oh! what a scandal!

What, then, My son, wilt thou suffer thyself to be deceived by the serpent? Wilt thou fall into his snares?

Be strong and brave, like the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of GOD.

Say unto the tempter: It is written, to be carnally-minded is death: If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.

Again it is written: What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? GOD will provide for our good name and for our wants.

8. Moreover, in order to preserve chastity, keep under thy flesh: keep it not delicately, or too luxuriously; for thou wilt find out that it is rebellious, and that thou canst not keep thy chastity in spite of its solicitation.

Subdue all thy feelings: fly from ease as from a plague: pray for My grace.

Look no more back again, admit no more the old leaven into thy soul: that so thou mayest be, as is fitting, pure and chaste.

CHAPTER LXX.

OF AMBITION.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, wherefore did I come down from heaven? Verily, not to receive a kingdom upon the earth—for My kingdom is not of this world. And wherefore, then? Even that I might save that which was lost.

And thou, wherefore art thou come? That after Me thou mightest be made a fisher of men—not that thou shouldest sit on My right hand or on My left in the kingdom of My church:

That thou mightest be the servant of all, minister to all—not that thou shouldest take the first seats in the synagogues.

What didst thou, on thy entrance into My sanctuary? Was it not even this, My son: thou prayedst the LORD to be the portion of thy inheritance and of thy cup?

And if the LORD be, then not glory, or high estate, or rule is the portion of thine inheritance.

2. But, My son, Satan, that old serpent, is not yet dead. He yet cometh amongst My children: and since he knoweth that avarice and pride are the root of all evil, he striveth in every way to instil into My priests a lust for glory and honour.

He leadeth them unto the pinnacle of the temple; and thence he showeth them all the kingdoms of the Church and the glory of them; and he saith, Behold how high ye may be raised up. Only strive, therefore, and ye shall be as gods.

Verily, that which this one and that one have attained, ye, too, can obtain.

Such a place, such a situation becometh not you less than those others: for this or that office ye are not more unfit than they.

Well, now, ye wish for the office of a bishop: surely it is a good work. A light should not abide under a bushel: set it up on a candlestick.

By this kind of temptation many are betrayed:

and then such incautious priests despise low and common duties.

Shortly, they desire and pant after the highest offices. They look after patrons, they ask, they go about, they move all things, so that they may attain the high position which they fancy;

Forgetting that a true disciple chooseth not his position, but is chosen for it by his Master: nor doth he presume to take unto himself any honour, except he be called of GOD, as was Aaron.

Even as I, My son, glorified not Myself to be made an high-priest: but He that said unto Me, Thou art My SON.

3. O, injurious wishes! O, dulness and hardness of their hearts! They wish to be above all, and below none: to be over all, and subject to none: to command all, and to serve none. They seek the things that are their own, and not those that are CHRIST JESUS'.

Oh! What vanity, thus to aspire to honours, and to raise themselves to a high estate! For, no matter how highly exalted they may be, they will never be satisfied.

Oh! What folly, to desire glory, which so soon passeth by!

For where, My son, where are those lords and masters whom thou knewest so well, who were adorned with the insignia of their office! Oh! now others have taken the honour which they once had.

Oh! What wretchedness, to envy those that are powerful and of lofty estate! To wish for the same lot, and to abandon to forgetfulness the high estate of eternity.

Oh! How short is that glory which is given and received from men!

Oh! How fallacious is that glory that disturbeth a man so much when he desireth it, and which, when once it is obtained, hath no pleasure in it, and only induces a man to seek for greater yet!

Oh! How is that glory to be feared which exposes a priest—the more, from his high position—to a greater fall, and to the severer judgment of GOD.

There shall come—yea, there shall come that fearful hour of judgment: and then how many will be seen to take with shame the lowest place, that now are beheld choosing the first

seats, and occupying the first places.

How many shall then be seen humbled, that now are seen to exalt themselves!

4. Oh, My son, seek My honour, seek My glory, seek for labour which is useful unto Me.

Regard not earthly things, for they pass away; nor are they the place of thy rest.

And even though, up to this day, thou mayest have lived in the highest honours, what will it profit thee, if thou hast to die this very instant?

Seek to do My Will, and that which is well-pleasing unto My Mind.

And thus be content to be the least, just as another would wish to be the greatest.

Thus be fearful and content in the very last place, just as thou wouldst be in the first.

Thus abide despicable and abject, and of no name and reputation, even as others desire to be honourable and great in the world.

Let My Will, and the love for My honour, so rule in thee, that it may give thee greater consolation and pleasure than any benefices which are given unto thee, or can possibly be given unto thee.

Verily, I say unto thee, My son, give up thyself, and thou shalt find Me: abide without choice, and thou shalt always be a gainer: resign thyself without any exception, caring not for thyself, but trusting in Me.

And resign thyself with constancy, not following the example of those who at first give up all, but afterwards, when temptation cometh, again become possessors of property, covetous, and ambitious.

O son! Suffer Me to do with thee what I will. I know what is good for thee: I, that order all things gently, placing every member in the body of My Church, even as I will.

Verily, My anxiety for thee is greater than any care that thou canst take for thyself.

CHAPTER LXXI.

OF AVARICE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I, the Son of Man, had not where to lay My Head: I, My son, became poor for thy sake, though I was rich, so that thou mightest be rich through My poverty.

And if I should say unto thee, My son, Go, sell all that thou hast, and give unto the poor—verily, thou oughtest to do it.

But I spare thee: I reserved the more bitter things for Myself: but I have commanded thee to do the milder things.

I speak as a man, by reason of thine infirmity, lest thou go awry, like the young man whom I had called to poverty.

Hearken, then, My son: lay not up for thyself treasures upon earth: for thou canst not serve Me and mammon.

Fly from avarice, as a most flagrant sin: for it is the slavery of idolatry: it is the root of all evils.

Keep, dearly beloved, keep thine eyes carefully watchful over thyself, lest, by chance, that most evil serpent be produced in thee, and thou know it not.

For, in truth, very often avarice beginneth from very small things, and from those which are, as it were, lawful.

First of all it seemeth to be merely a prudent economy: but it goes on and increases; and it is not weakened even by old age, it is rather strengthened and rendered more confirmed.

If riches, therefore, abound, set not thy heart upon them; but, on the contrary, from thy heart renounce all that thou hast: so that if thou hast temporal goods, they may not possess, but be possessed by thee—not that thou mayest heap them together, but to give them away at a fitting season.

But if riches do not abound, be not sad, but rather be joyful: Blessed are the poor. Having food and raiment, be therewith content: thou broughtest nothing into this world, and

it is certain thou canst carry nothing out.

The less thou hast, the more free thou art—the more ready to run after Me: in the hour of death thou wilt the more easily relinquish the world: at the judgment thou wilt fear the less. For I will not then say unto thee, Woe unto thee that wast rich! Nor shall I thus speak: Son, remember, thou hast received thy good things in thy lifetime.

2. I call thee, My son; answer Me. Thou hast renounced the world: thou hast taken Me for the lot of thine inheritance: and dost thou still wish to be rich? And dost thou willingly fall into the snare, and those hurtful desires which sink man into perdition? Hast thou not supposed that gain is godliness?

What seekest thou in thy ministry? Dost thou not seek after the milk and the wool, and not the salvation of thy sheep?

Answer me—give an account. Wast thou not poor when thou wast in the world? And art not thou rich now thou art in holy orders?

The sheep were going astray, money was being got: didst thou not leave the sheep, and accumulate money?

Reckon up thy sheep—reckon up thy money: what hast thou done for the one, and what hast thou not done for the other?

Did not the children ask for bread, and thou didst not break it unto them? And all the while thou wast adding to thy already abundant possessions greater abundance—got with most earnest labour—and wast multiplying thy estates with all diligence?

Were not souls sick, and thou sawest it not? And all the while thou wast caring for thy flocks and herds with all possible attention.

Was not the wolf devouring My sheep, and thou didst not bark? And all the while thou wast watching, day and night, lest the thief should break into thine own house?

Was not My House sordid with poverty, whilst thine own abounded with gold?

Was not My table deserted, whilst thine was attended by men of business?

Were not My poor fainting with want, and all the

while thy coffers were full of money.

3. What thinkest thou? What art thou planning? Is it not some scheme for buying and selling? And not diligence for saving and making holy?

Dost thou not require of thy people, not holiness, nor sacred virtues, but thou extortest their debts with haughtiness?

Dost thou not spare the rich, when thou art in the pulpit, lest thou shut that abundant source against thee?

Art thou not hard upon thyself, denying thyself proper food and raiment—not for the love of humility and mortification, but by reason of a most base meanness?

Art thou not said, by thy people, to be like a dropsical man, always swallowing gold, but never satisfied? Thy breast is always full, but thou never givest milk.

Thou shalt die, My son, and not live. Thou shalt leave the gold of thine avarice cankered with rust, and it shall cry against thee at the last day.

The price of sacrilege—the blood of the widow and the orphan—the life of the poor—shall accuse thee in My sight: thou shalt hear it, and it shall grieve thee: thou shalt gnash with thy teeth, and consume away: thy ungodly desire shall perish.

Even in this world shall thy gold cry out against thee: the offence of My people shall come forth out of thy treasures: and when the people are freed from thy ill-treatment, they shall curse thee, saying, O greedy pastor: may thy money perish with thee!

4. O thou Lazarus, already dead four days, and now stinking in the tomb of thy riches!

Lo, I weep over thee: behold My tears, hear My voice!

Lo, I say unto thee, Come forth: take off the stone: break the chest: loose the bands: I do not wish thee to die, but that thou mayest be converted and live.

Scatter abroad thy gold, and give it unto the poor: make to thyself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: give up thy shameful lucre.

Oh! thou that hast imitated Judas in avarice: follow him not, even to hanging thyself.

O thou miser! O uncir-

cumcised in heart and ears! How long wilt thou resist the Holy Spirit? How long wilt thou say, Bring unto me—bring more and more?

Mayhap thou art chaste, and sober, and learned, and humble, and pious: and in thine own fancy thou thinkest thyself a saint: but thou art covetous, and thou shalt perish: thou shalt die with the rich man, and be buried with him in hell.

CHAPTER LXXII.

OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY OF THE CHURCH.

The Voice of the Disciple.

1. Unto whomsoever I have given much, of him will I require much: and to whom I have committed much, of him will I ask the more.

There will come an hour which is known unto Me: then shalt thou appear before Me, My son, and I will question thee of the talents which thou hast received.

Behold, I have entrusted to thee property and possessions which have been offered unto Me by the faithful; so that, serving the Altar, thou shouldest live of the Altar.

But beware, My son, lest thou abuse these things—lest thou be luxurious at the expense of the Altar: they are the vows of the faithful, the patrimony of the poor, and are to be spent only for ecclesiastical purposes, and for the assistance of thy brethren.

Take, therefore, what is necessary for thine own becoming living: but do not spend to no purpose what is too much for thy rank and thy proper and becoming living: and use it not to enrich thy relations and friends: for thus wilt thou get damnation together with Ananias and Sapphira.

2. Where, then, will ye go, and whither will ye fly from My Face, O ye, that squander the means of the Church upon luxury and vanity?

Whither will ye go, that are honoured by reason of

My wealth, and yet pay not the honour unto Me?

That walk in regal apparel, glittering with meretricious splendour: that glory in rings and golden trinkets, shining more than My Altar:

That rejoice in feastings and expensive drinks: that delight in the harp, and the lyre, and the pipe: that lie wantonly on costly beds:

That delight in perfumes: that abound in every kind of extravagances: that thus make My goods serve your own luxuries?

Whither will ye go from My Face, when the naked and the starving shall cry out against you, That was ours that ye spent: ye took from us what ye so foolishly squandered away: ye fed us not: ye slew us.

3. O, ye sons of Eli! ye sons of Belial! ye fat bulls, that compass me about, hearken unto Me.

The Jews said, It is not lawful for us to put the money into the treasury, for it is the price of blood: and they bought with it a field to bury strangers in.

But ye, worse than mine enemies, purchase vanity and pleasure; and ye thus spend—to the offence of Christians, to the death of souls—that which was given unto you for the aid of the needy.

For this cause, will I require My flock at your hand: for this, will I make you to cease from feeding My flock any more, nor shall ye feed yourselves any longer.

I will set My flock free from your mouth, and it shall be no longer for food for you.

4. O, My sons! If ye have much from the Altar, if more than is enough for decent living and clothing, then render it unto the CHURCH—give unto the poor what thou owest unto them.

Remember that thou art set over My household that thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

Remember how many saints—not only fulfilling this commandment, but most holily and most generously going beyond it—scattered abroad unto the poor not only their superabundant things, but even their very necessaries.

These have treasure in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.

These dwell not in earth-

ly splendour and in palaces, but in the eternal glories of the Saints.

These are clothed not with purple and fine linen, but with glory and eternal light.

These drink not of the blood of the grape, but of the richness of My House, and enjoy the fulness of My pleasure.

Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

OF ALMS-GIVING.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, I tell thee the truth: and I know that thou believest Me.

Verily, I am poor in the poor, weak in the weak, begging in the beggars, crying with the mourner.

As often as thou doest good unto one of the least of these that are Mine, thou doest it unto Me: and as often as thou doest it not unto these, thou doest it not unto Me.

Assuredly, I believe that if thou shouldest see Me in want, and begging help from thee, thou wouldest immediately, and without delay, hasten to help Me.

Have faith as a grain of mustard seed, My son; and when thou shalt see thy brother asking of thee to render any necessity, say within thyself: Lo, JESUS Himself standeth at my door and knocketh.

Blessed am I, unto whom it is granted to understand, that, besides this beggar, I give aid unto my GOD Himself.

O my soul! How will the love of GOD remain in me, if I shut up the bowels of my compassion from Him?

O my soul! Surely it is better to hide what we have in His Bosom, than to lay up treasures of gold in the earth.

Come, therefore: let us give, and we shall lend unto the LORD.

Come: we have much, let us give abundantly: we

have little, still let us strive to give liberally of that little.

Come, let us break bread for JESUS, hungry.

Come, let us bring JESUS, starving and a wanderer, into our house. Come, and let us clothe JESUS, naked.

O my soul! Thus it is commanded us to open our hands!

2. Thou hast sinned, My son. Wouldest thou be made clean? Give that which remaineth unto thee in alms: and I will create in thee a heart contrite and humble, which I will not despise: and behold, all things shall be clean unto thee.

This is My Word, and it shall not return unto Me empty.

Oh! If thou wouldest well consider this, with what liberality wouldest thou give unto the poor.

Thou feelest thyself, as it were, deserted by Me: thou findest that I am angry with thee.

Wouldest thou be reconciled? Dost thou wish to turn, and to appease thy GOD?

Give alms, and it shall deliver thee from all evil, and I will be merciful unto thee.

The days are evil: temptation trieth thee: persecution is raised against thee: misfortune cometh on.

Give alms, My son; and in this evil day the LORD will set thee at liberty, and will preserve thee, and will keep thee alive, and will make thee blessed upon earth, and thou shalt not be delivered into the hands of thine enemies, and thy GOD will give His help abundantly.

Dost thou wish to obtain from heaven special graces —more precious gifts for thyself and for thy flock? Give, and it shall be given unto thee.

Give liberally: good measure, pressed down and shaken together, shall the LORD pour into thy bosom.

Dost thou wish to be saved? Give alms, and it shall cause thee to find mercy and eternal life, nor will it suffer thy soul to go into darkness.

Verily, My son, in the judgment thou wilt assuredly hear these most sweet words of the SAVIOUR: Come, thou blessed of My FATHER, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and I was thirsty, and thou gav-

est food and drink unto Me.

3. My son, thine adversary, Satan, knoweth well that all these things are true.

He knoweth, also, that it is most true that, if thou wilt not do alms-deeds, there hangeth over thee the loss of My grace in this present world, and, in the world to come, the greatest wrath.

He knoweth that I, in My anger, will say unto the hard and unmerciful, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal fire: for I was in want, and ye helped Me not.

And therefore, in every way that he can, he striveth to close up thy bowels of mercy.

Thou hast but little, he saith: if thou give, thou wilt have still less. Thou hast gotten it with greatest labour, and thou wilt lose it in one moment.

It is better for thee to receive than to give. To-day, thou hast whereupon thou mayest live; but to-morrow, what wilt thou have?

And what, if hail destroy thy fields? And what, if fire consume thy house? And what, if sickness come upon thee? And what, if thou arrive at a weak old age? . . . Take care of thyself for the future.

And who is this that asketh of thee? A beggar. Well, then; but is he really poor? May be, he feigneth poverty only.

He is idle: let him work, and then he will not want. How do so many others manage, who, having nothing besides, yet, in the sweat of their brow, know how to get their daily bread?

It is better to aid industrious persons of that sort, if they be in want.

Thy barns are not large enough for the abundance of thy crops. Employ these men to build thee larger ones, to beautify thy house, to turn thy gardens into paradises of pleasure: and thus wilt thou provide for them and for thyself too at the same time.

4. Behold, My son, behold the crafty wiles of the enemy. Behold, how he striveth to turn away thy face from the poor, and the orphan, that I have committed unto thee.

Behold, how he striveth that, to the scandal of My people, thou, as the Levite, or as the hard-hearted Priest, shouldst pass by on the other side: whilst, per-

haps, some good Samaritan will kindly give.

Perhaps it is true, My son, that thou hast little. But when thou diest, thou shalt take nothing with thee.

And if, besides, by giving somewhat of that little, thou make thyself poor: remember that I, when I was rich, became poor for thy sake.

Perhaps what thou hast got, thou didst acquire with great labour. But, My son, if it cost thee so much, then have a care that thou mayest keep it for ever.

Knowest thou not that by giving on the earth, thou layest up treasures in heaven?

It is better, saith Satan, for thee to receive than to give. I, My son, have taught thee the contrary.

And verily, he that receiveth now, shall lose in death what he hath received; and he that giveth now, shall find in death what he hath given.

5. Provide for thyself, saith the enemy: provide for hunger, for wants, for old age.

And I say unto thee, provide for thy soul, provide for thy salvation, for eternity.

No matter how much thou mayest care for thyself upon earth, thou wilt not be able to add one day to thy life.

But thou canst, My son, gain a blessed eternity, and in it thou mayest deserve many degrees of felicity, according to the abundance of thy alms-deeds.

This, My son, is the most useful—this is the wisest providence.

Be not thou too anxious, saying, What shall I eat? and wherewithal shall I be clothed?

I know that thou hast need of these things: I will have a care for thee.

Didst thou ever see a charitable man forsaken, or, in old age, begging his bread? O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?

6. But perhaps that beggar doth not want. What, then? If he want not, still wilt thou be deceived in doing good? Not at all so.

He, indeed, may tell thee a lie. Still thou, by giving to him, assuredly wilt do a good work upon Me.

But perhaps, My son, he, about whom thou hast some doubt, is a true Lazarus—really poor, and in great necessity.

And if thou, by reason of that slight suspicion which occurrest unto thee, then deniest him alms, thou doest rashly and wickedly. Choose, then, the safer part: open thine hand.

Let him work, saith Satan, and he will not want. Yea, My son: but I say unto thee, Give, and it shall be given unto thee.

7. The enemy saith still further: Look at the number of labourers that are poor, the number of workmen that are in want: employ them, and pay them. They deserve assistance.

Yes, indeed, My son, thou doest well, if thou hast work, and employest the poorer workmen: and this is even a good work of mercy. But thou oughtest to do these things, and not to leave the others undone.

When thou choosest poor men for thy work, and payest them, thou helpest them indeed; but thou givest nought but what is due: thou losest nothing. Thou hast spent thy money, but thou hast received work in return.

Imitate, My son, better deeds of charity. Break thy bread freely to the hungry.

8. Lastly, My son, with all thy might, keep thyself from the last suggestion of the deceiver—the devil.

He saith unto thee: Build larger barns: enlarge thy house: turn thy gardens into paradises of pleasure. The poor will work, they will earn wages, and will live.

Behold how, by this, he would reduce thee, though thou be rich, to straitened circumstances, so that thou mayest no longer be able to do alms-deeds.

He proposeth to thee great expenses. Thou wilt spend thy treasures: and so thou wilt no more be able to assist the poor man and the sick man, that is unfit for labour.

Hearken unto Me, My son: be sparing towards thyself; so that thou mayest be liberal to others.

9. But attend still further and observe how, under the appearance of charity and piety, the enemy would lead thee to vanity and pride.

What will it profit thee, those overgrown barns, those great and splendid buildings, those pleasant parks which he proposeth to thee?

Such things, My son, become not My minister.

Thou oughtest to despise earthly things—not to increase them, nor multiply them.

Thou hast chosen, not the pleasant things of this life, but Me, thy GOD, for the lot of thine heritage.

Thou oughtest not to claim to thyself the name of a rich man, or of a powerful one: but thou oughtest to get the reputation of a saint, of a modest man, of a mortified man, of one that is self-denying, of one that is dead to the world, of a merciful man.

10. Sow, therefore, that thou mayest reap. Give up thy superabundance unto the poor: give kindly, give cheerfully, for I love a cheerful giver.

Give especially unto them that are of the household of faith, and to the righteous poor.

Give not so as to be seen of men, and so receive thy reward in this world; but give as in My presence, and for My sake, in secret; and My FATHER, that seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

And My people, who will not be ignorant of thy charity, will reverence thee, will love thee, will trust in thee, will fear thee, will obey thee.

And at length, when death shall come upon thee, thou wilt be at rest; and thy righteousness shall remain for ever.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

OF TEMPERANCE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, wherefore comest thou unto Me? Surely that thou mayest seek My kingdom, and draw others into it, and at length, together with them, take possession of it.

But, My son, My kingdom is not meat and drink: nor shall he enter into it that liveth according to the flesh.

Wherefore, be sober, and in thy desires take no care of thy flesh.

O thou child of My kingdom! If thou couldest

know what heaven is unto which thou art called, and unto which thou art going, assuredly thou wouldest not require to be moved to contempt of earthly delights.

Assuredly, then, this world would be most distasteful unto thee, and all the desirable things therein: assuredly, hardly tolerating thy wants, thou wouldest cry out from the very heart: Oh that I needed neither to eat nor to drink! Oh that no such wants as these, but spiritual ones only, might possess me! O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

2. But, My son, thou walkest by faith, and not by sight: nor yet dost thou conceive the good things which enter not into the heart of man!

And, alas! Thou bearest in thy mortal flesh, and wilt bear even unto thy life's end, a law of thy senses opposed to the law of thy mind.

Beware, My son, lest it rule over thee: keep thine appetite in subjection unto them, and rule thou over it: wherefore, war, and fight continually against the law of sin.

That it was which ruined Adam and all the human race in paradise: that it was that thrust down into hell the rich man that fared sumptuously.

Nature must be sustained: take what is necessary: but a holy law forbiddeth to seek those things which are most pleasant, or when using what is necessary, to go beyond due limits: for otherwise the flesh would wax wanton against the spirit.

Watch, therefore, watch: each man's peculiar lust draggeth him away; and if thou use not restraint, shortly thou wilt go beyond the bounds of sobriety and temperance: and then thou wilt behold thy servant, whom thou hast pampered, become rebellious.

O, My son! One thing is needful. Wouldest thou rule over thyself? Desire, then, to rule in the midst of thine opposing desires, and then thou wilt more easily curb thine appetite, and all the inclinations of thy flesh.

3. But, verily, violence is necessary for this: and that man hath a hard contest who striveth to overcome himself.

Gird up thyself, there-

fore, like a man, and prepare thy soul for the trial: remember thy latter end, and thou wilt not sin.

Set thyself to do, what, probably, thou wouldest not do out of mere prudence.

Think over thy past years: behold how many transgressions thou hast committed—by how many iniquities thou hast offended GOD: and then say, Oh, if I had been overtaken in these! oh, if I had then died and been judged!

But Thy mercy spared me, O LORD; and it remaineth, therefore, unto me, now to repent, or, after death, I shall suffer a heavier punishment still.

The more I spare myself now, and follow the lusts of the flesh in luxurious living, the more heavily shall I hereafter be punished, and the greater will be that which I shall reserve for eternal fire.

Think of that eternal fire, and say, Oh! if my soul be there detained, and if it could then, as now, set itself free, by bridling unworthy appetites, surely it would do so, and do so with all its might.

O my soul! Do now what thou wouldest then wish to do, and thou shalt be saved.

4. Look, also, upon Me, My son, the fulfiller of all righteousness: incline thine ear, and hearken unto My speech: behold, I fasted forty days in the desert, neither eating nor drinking: behold, I thirsted on the Cross, and I had vinegar and gall to drink.

And wouldest thou be a delicate member under a Head thus austere and mortified? and wouldest thou be nourished luxuriously, and be fed sumptuously, thou that art guilty—thou, a sinner?

I hungered—I, thy Master: and thou, the disciple, wouldest thou abound? I thirsted—I, thy SAVIOUR: and thou, that art the redeemed, dost thou wish to be drunk with wine?

My kingdom was not of this world: and wouldest thou be filled with the royal delicacies of this world? Thou, a man of GOD, wouldest thou serve thy belly?

O son, son! If thou wouldest come after Me, deny thyself, and bear about My dying in thy body.

5. Avoid feastings: if thou lovest them, thou lovest dangers, and thou shalt

die in them: for there lust rageth as a fire.

If thou remain at home, and have a care to order thy table according to the rules of sobriety and temperance, the serpent of sensuality will be smitten, and it will be easily slain.

But it will grow amidst feasts and drinkings, and will become a fierce beast, that will devour thee.

For there the carnal appetite is excited by seeing, is irritated by tasting, by reason of the wandering of the mind is not watched, by reason of the pleasure is not restrained: yea, by the stimulants of the feasters is yet further excited, as if it did not before rage sufficiently.

And so thou wilt hardly abide there sober, except thou be mindful of death, judgment, and hell.

6. But, verily, it may be that thou canst not keep away from every feast: for to be present at some thou art taught by charity, at others thou art commanded to be present by a necessary honour, and at some even zeal itself commands thy presence.

I Myself did eat with publicans and sinners, for to them that were sick there was need of a physician.

But, My son, if thou go only to those feasts which either charity, or necessary honour, or zeal induce thee to be present at, how seldom wilt thou go, and how many feasts wilt thou be clear of!

But if, when often invited to dinner, thou refuse not to go, how easily wilt thou be despised; if, especially, thou enter into a society given to feasting, and both receive and return invitations, soon will there be a talk of thee amongst the people, unto whom thou wilt give an occasion of falling.

The poor will talk, and say: Behold how the priest liveth luxuriously on our alms, whilst we are consumed with want.

The labourers, the workmen, the reapers will cry out, and say: Behold how the priest liveth joyously in abundance, whilst we, in the sweat of our brow, live upon scanty fare.

My sheep will exclaim, and will rise up against their pastor, and say: Physician, heal thyself: teach thyself penitence, sobriety, labour.

7. And truly, My son, what is the life of a priest

that loveth feasts? He riseth late—scarcely doth he say his prayers—he hastily performeth his daily duty—he celebrateth the Holy Communion unprepared and hurriedly, and without the inward spirit; presently, he hasteth to the table—he indulgeth the lusts of the flesh—he spendeth his time with the feasters in games and idle talk—he goeth away late—and, by reason of fatigue, without reflection, he lieth down to rest.

And thus, following his own sensuality, by degrees he falleth more and more from becoming piety, he loseth the grace of GOD, and he becometh a man of mere appetite at last, unequal to the things which are GOD'S—study, and the sacred ministry.

The Voice of the Disciple.

8. O LORD, shut up the gates of my lust: turn into bitterness all carnal delights that take me from Thy holy service.

Free me from those enticing lusts that war against the soul: give me not over to a foolish mind.

For I know that I cannot have two joys—take my pleasure in this world, and afterwards reign with Thee in heaven.

Verily, it is better for me to be abstinent upon earth—yea, even for a while to be in want—and afterwards be satisfied with Thee for ever, than here to be filled with luxuries, and hereafter to mourn in hunger, and thirst, and reproach.

CHAPTER LXXV.

OF MODESTY IN DRESS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Let thy moderation in dress, My son, be known unto all men. So walk as thou hast the prescribed rule laid down for thee by the Church.

If thou hear not the Church when she teacheth thee, thou shalt be as a heathen man and a publican: and I will visit thee, if thou put on a strange garment.

See, therefore, that thou

despise not the law of thy Mother. She hath ordained the colour of thy habit: observe this colour. She hath forbidden vanity and luxury: avoid thou these.

She hath prescribed simplicity and decency: hold to these, keep thyself in these. She forbiddeth dirty and patched garments: reject thou them.

2. How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!

How many priests dost thou see that are ashamed of My badges! They are a royal priesthood, and yet they despise the wearing of the royal crown.

They have renounced the world, and yet they love to wear clothes full of the vile dust of the world: they are My soldiers, and yet, fat and wanton, they kick at My service; and they cast away My dress.

They are My servants, and they try to please men: they are clergy, and they appear to be bridegrooms: they are of the world, and therefore they love the world, and the world loveth them.

O fools! They are exalted amongst vain men, but they are an abomination unto Me. They are ashamed of Me before men, and I will be ashamed of them in the presence of My Father Which is in heaven.

O son! Keep thyself from the evil-doers: put far from thee their vanity, and the haughtiness of their eyes.

Neither follow thou, My son, the example of those others, who, though they follow not after a worldly appearance indeed, yet are not observant of good discipline, and care not for rules, saying, that such trifles are beneath their notice.

Nor of those who, by reason of the affectation of too great carelessness, rather cause laughter than produce respect.

But regard those and imitate them who, by a propriety of outward dress, show the inward probity of their manners. In their steps, My son, let thy foot be found.

The Voice of the Disciple.

3. Them will I regard, them will I follow, O Lord: verily, it is good for me to do after their example.

It is good that I, with them, omit not one jot or one tittle of Ecclesiastical rule.

It is good that I, with them, be faithful in that which is least, so that I may, with them, also be faithful in that which is greater.

O how beautiful are their steps, O LORD! How powerfully doth their look allure one to virtue! What respect doth their gravity produce—their humility, simplicity, modesty!

I will follow, O LORD, I will follow, if by any means I may attain their holy appearance.

O LORD! The part of my inheritance and my lot is in the land of the living: shall my eyes ever again be opened to the vanities of this world?

What have I to do with the earth, and with the glitter of human follies? What have I to do with the world, and the beauty of the world? What have I to do with the elegance and the ornaments of the effeminate?

One thing have I asked of Thee, O LORD JESUS, which I will require—that I may always bear about a modesty in my body, so that Thy life may be manifested in my mortal flesh.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

OF THE PRIEST'S HOUSE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, be thou a good ruler of thine house. If thou knowest not how to rule thine own house, how wilt thou have a care for My Church?

In all things thy life ought to be a pattern for My sheep: so that not only by those things which thou sayest from the pulpit or teachest in private exhortation, but by the way of acting in all things they may be guided aright.

Have a care, therefore, that, with thy sayings, all things, that may be seen in thine house and noticed, may well agree.

2. Thou teachest that there is for man upon earth no abiding city: that he is a stranger and a pilgrim here.

What thou assertest by thy words, testify also by thy deeds. Order thine house as if it were an abode that continueth not.

Let it be simple: not with what is needful, but free from superfluities. Let it say to those that enter in, It is enough for one that will soon die.

Thou teachest that the kingdom of a Christian is not of this world: that all his glory is from within: that he should consider all the splendour of the world as dung.

Prove this also, by thy deeds. In thy house let there be no useless ornaments, such as the houses of the children of this world have: by it let thy moderation be known unto every one that cometh in.

Thou teachest that those who live according to the flesh shall die: that those things which are above are to be cared for, not those that are on the earth.

Show this, then, by thy deeds. Let thy furniture and thy table be such as becometh a saint—really spiritual, really sober, really dead to himself.

Thou teachest that uncleanness, and filthiness, and foolish talking, should not be once named amongst Christians, as becometh saints.

Wherefore, in thy house, let there not be any ornament, or book, or picture which can cause the least shadow of suspicion of such things.

Thou teachest that there should be no glorying, save in My Cross: that in it there is salvation, life, refuge from enemies.

Wherefore, of thy house, let My Cross be the special ornament and glory. Place it for a sign, so that, to thyself, it may always be a present memorial of My love, and an incentive to righteousness; and that those who are stricken with a sense of their sins and come in unto thee, may behold, and be converted and live.

Thou teachest that, in a Christian house, all things ought to be done decently and in order.

Wherefore, have a care and direct, that with thee everything be clean and well ordered: that the hours of prayer, of pious reading, of going to rest, of rising up, of working, be fixed, and carefully observed.

Thou teachest that those who have no care for their own, and especially for

those of their own house, have denied the faith, and are worse than infidels.

Wherefore, if thy father, or thy mother, or brother, or sister, abide with thee, have a care that they lead an honest and a pious life, and be an example unto the faithful.

If, in any way, they give an occasion for scandal—though it be thy mother or thy father himself—beg, implore, teach them to amend.

Thou art a priest: thou hast one greater than them. Thou owest this unto Me and to My people.

If they will not reform, provide elsewhere for their wants.

See, also, that in all things thy men-servants and maid-servants be subject unto thee—in nowise contradicting thee, but in all things showing a good faith, so that in all things they may adorn the doctrine of thy GOD.

Anxiously watch over them: and if, on their part, anything happen which may cause one of My little ones to offend, break off the iniquity by righteousness: take away the evil from thine house: none but holy servants and maidens are fitted for a holy priest.

Thou teachest that Christians ought to be merciful, and given to hospitality.

Show thy faith by thy deeds. Let thy house, to the utmost of thy power, be an abundant source of alms-deeds and charity: so that of thee it may be said, as was formerly said of a certain pious priest, He is himself the nurse and physician of all that lack.

3. In [redacted] word, let thy house be so sacred as to admit of no kind of impurity: let thy house be so holy as to direct others in the way of holiness.

Let it be as the house of a father, unto which My sheep may come with reverence and faith, knowing that therein abideth a true man of GOD.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

OF RESIDENCE.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I did not leave Mine own comfortless; but I wished to be with them even unto the world's end.

Do thou also, My son, abide constantly in the midst of the people amongst whom thou hast gone: knowing this, that if thou art desirous of much travelling about, thou wilt injure both thyself and thy flock.

2. What thinkest thou, My son? If a man should have a hundred sheep, and should give them unto his servant to take care of, and that servant should go away, and journey through neighbouring countries — should make merry with his friends, and in the mean time should leave the sheep to themselves without a shepherd:

Verily, thou wouldest say: That servant is a wicked servant: and when his lord shall come, he will cut him asunder, and give him his portion with the unbelievers.

How, then, can I spare thee, My son, if those sheep, redeemed with My Blood, which I committed unto thee, thou desertest, so that thou mayest take thy leisure in vain travelling about?

My son, My son, stay and watch: for the adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

Stay and watch, that thou mayest resist him, and thy sheep become not a prey.

3. What thinkest thou still further, My son? If a man have a certain business, and he commit it unto his servant, saying: See to this business until I come: look out for buyers, and sell:

And if that servant, tiring of domestic care and diligence, should turn himself one time to these friends, another time to other friends, and in the mean time the buyers come, go away empty, buy elsewhere, and thus the business flags, and the profit of the merchant ceaseth:

Assuredly thou wouldst say: That is an unfaithful

servant: he ought to be beaten with stripes by his master, and cast forth.

But, son, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchantman.

I, that am the LORD of the merchandise of souls, have set thee over that merchandise: so that, to every one that asketh, thou mightest dispense My mysteries at all times.

But if thou, wearying of constant residence, fliest here and there, it may easily happen that, at one time, this man may seek the living water of Baptism for his infant just born and ready to die:

Or, at another time, that some one else may beg the last succours of religion for sick persons unexpectedly in extremity:

Or, again, another man, moved by a special grace—touched from within with grief for his sins—may demand the wine and the oil of penitence.

But thou wilt be absent: and thus will My profit cease. The profit, namely, of that soul which will depart in its original sin through the defect of Baptism.

The profit of that sick person, that, with his sins not absolved, shall depart unto another life.

The profit of that sinner, moved unto repentance, who, since he found not thee at the moment of grace, soon forgetting his holy fear, will no more return unto thee, and again will pass months, and perhaps years, in sins and impenitence.

4. And lastly, what thinkest thou, My son? If any master should appoint a certain man to watch that the thief come not and break open his house.

But he should leave his watch, and go away, and in the mean time the thief cometh, and breaketh into the house, and spoileth it,

Truly, thou sayest: That man is guilty of, and chargeable with, the theft and the robbery.

My son, once more change the name, and thou hast delivered sentence against a pastor that resideth not.

Whilst he is absent, the way to the dwelling of My flock lieth open: and that wicked one cometh, and by offences he entereth in, and he taketh away the word out of the heart of My faithful ones, lest they be saved.

O thou strong man, armed! keep, therefore, constantly thy palace.

When thou art present, all that thou hast shall be in peace; but when thou art absent, the strong enemy shall come upon thee, and take away from thee all thine armour wherein thou trustedst, and shall divide thy spoils.

5. My son, how teachest thou fathers? and how mothers? Surely thus: that they should never leave their young children unto themselves, but should have a watch over them, look to them, and observe them.

Lest, may be, they should fall into the fire, or tumble into some pit: lest, weak as they are, they be slain by wild beasts: lest, careless as they are, they commit something that is wrong.

O son! No one ought to be so much a father or a mother as thou.

Keep, therefore, thy children under thy care, even as a hen keepeth her chickens under her wings.

Be not as the hireling, that fleeth, and that careth not for the sheep.

Have a care scarcely ever to be absent, except when compelled by necessity; and then, also, provide that some good and faithful friend fitly and duly supply thy place.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

OF THE OBEDIENCE DUE UNTO THE BISHOP.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Obey, My son, those that have the rule over thee, and submit thyself unto them: lo, thus have I commanded, and thou hast promised to keep My commands.

Thou hast promised obedience unto thy bishop, and unto his successors: pay thy vows, and thou shalt be dear in My sight: obedience is better than sacrifice.

Behold, My son, I gave not sacrifices and oblations unto My Father; but when He had prepared a body for Me, I came to fulfil His Will.

I always did that which was well-pleasing unto Him: I became obedient unto

death, even the death of the Cross.

2. Thy prelate, thy pastor, thy bishop, whom, with the rest, My Spirit hath appointed to rule My Church, of which thou art a member, he watcheth over thee, as one that must give an account for thy soul: see, then, that he may do it with joy and not with grief.

Submit thyself with thy whole heart, for GOD's sake, more even for love than from necessity.

Far safer indeed is it, My son, to be in subjection, than to bear the rule.

In quiet submission, under the rule of thy prelate, thou shalt find much rest: but if thou withdraw thyself from obedience, thou wilt withdraw thyself, also, from grace.

O son, if thou submit not thyself willingly, surely it is a sign that thou art very carnal—that thou dost not live in Me, but in thyself, and lovest thyself inordinately.

3. Is it a great thing, My son, if thou, that art dust and nothing, submit thyself unto man, when I, the Almighty and the most Highest, that made all things out of nothing, for thy sake humbly subjected Myself unto man?

I was made the lowest of all, that thou, by My lowliness, mightest overcome thy pride.

Learn to obey, thou that art dust: learn to humble thyself, thou earth and clay: learn to submit thyself unto all subjection.

4. Perhaps thou complainest within thyself: wherefore, sayest thou, wherefore doth he thus rebuke? Wherefore thus forbid? Wherefore thus command? Wherefore thus enjoin?

What is that that thou sayest, My son? He that toucheth him toucheth the apple of My Eye?

Doth the rebuke seem to thee too harsh, the command too hard? O foolish man! What hast thou to complain of? O thou miserable sinner—thou that hast offended GOD so often, and so often deserved hell! What canst thou say against all this?

Rather be sharp against thine own self, and suffer not thy swelling pride to abide in thee.

5. But for what reason is this, or that?

I will obey in things needful: in indifferent things it cannot matter.

What, My son? Wouldest thou, then, become a judge of thy judge, and a guide of thy guide?

Thou sayest that the things which the prelate commandeth thee are silly: and now thou despisest him therefore. Knowest thou not, that he that despiseth him despiseth Me?

What he ordereth thou callest silly: be not, My son, wiser than is needful: if to thee, judging hastily, the commands of the ruler do seem useless, assuredly the observance of them by him that obeyeth is, nevertheless, not useless.

Have a care of thyself: not of the command, but of the observance of that command, wilt thou have to give an account.

Obey, therefore, thy bishop without reluctance: obey, as the hand the head: it, verily, without hesitation and without murmuring, performeth whatsoever is commanded it by the head. Behold thy rule: do thou likewise.

6. I beseech thee, My son, to know him that is over thee in the LORD, and admonisheth thee: hold him very greatly in love: esteem him with the greatest honour: he is My anointed.

Beware, therefore, that thou disobey not, rebel not, detract not, murmur not, blaspheme not.

A leprosy punished Miriam that murmured against Moses: the earth opened and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, that despised Aaron: fire consumed the messenger of Ahaziah, that mocked Elijah: death was ordained for him that was found and refused to obey the command of the priest.

How much heavier punishment, thinkest thou, he would deserve that, despising the High Priest of the new covenant, despiseth Me, also, and thus doeth despite unto the Spirit of Grace?

CHAPTER LXXIX.

OF THE CHOICE OF FRIENDS.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, there is nothing to be compared to a faithful friend.

If thou find for thy society a good and an amiable man, let him be more thy friend than thine own brother.

Trust thy business with him, and with his good counsels thy soul shall be made sweet: if evil happen unto thee, by his help thou wilt bear it.

He shall be unto thee a strong protection, a medicine of life and of immortality: and thou wilt perceive that there is no weight of gold and silver worthy of being compared with the goodness of his fidelity.

2. My son, who can find such a friend? He that feareth the LORD, he shall find such an one.

The children of this world, indeed, find friends: but what kind of friends? Companions of the table, that abide not in the day of necessity.

Inconstant friends, that love to-day: and to-morrow are turned into enmity.

Friends that wheedle and cajole, that guide in a way that is not good.

Foolish friends, that receive not the words of prudence, nor are they pleased except with the follies that are in their own hearts.

Friends that run after the rich, and fly from the poor: that respect the persons of the powerful: that love not the giver, but the gifts of him that giveth.

Good-for-nothing friends, that allure into their own paths, and cause offence unto the soul.

Such, My son, are surely friends only in name; but, in reality, they are the most pernicious enemies.

Oh, of how many and of how great evils is the company of such friends, and too great familiarity with them, the cause!

How many priests hath such friendship as this turned aside, and doth daily turn aside, from the greatest piety unto the deepest lukewarmness, and from

lukewarmness unto a yet deeper state of wickedness!

One while, they cajole him whom they wish to destroy: another while, they lie in wait, setting traps: and then they swallow him up quick as hell, and they take away all that he hath.

3. Understand what I say, My son. When any good and holy priest rashly entereth into company of a familiar kind with such as these, at first they flatter him, they fawn upon him, they hide their ill-will, they pretend a pleasant way, they make a show of loving him.

And this foolish person thinketh himself safe in their society. And now he thinketh it a pleasure to be with them.

And then he giveth up something of his usual prayers and studies, so that he may solace himself with them for a longer time. And then he is less diligent in the work of his sacred ministry.

And yet the pious wont of his former rule recalleth him to himself. His conscience smiteth him, and saith: Time, which is irrecoverable, flieth away. Thou art losing it, and thou shalt give an account.

And then that careless one desireth to draw back, but he is held fast: he desireth to insist upon it, but he is laughed at.

Man is born for society, say they. There is no end of reading many books: frequent meditation is a trouble of the flesh.

Woe unto him that is alone! There is no good in being wise overmuch: one ought to be wise only for moderation's sake.

Thus do the wicked change themselves into angels of light. The miserable man believes it all: now he is deceived, he is ashamed to keep himself away—yea, he regardeth his qualms of conscience as mere scruples.

And now, from morning to night, he talketh only of trifles, and he remaineth idle all the day.

4. How changed is he now from what he was! But this is only the beginning, My son. Idleness will teach many more evils than this.

Shortly, these foolish and wicked friends act with greater freedom. Now, they fear not to detract, to speak evil, to laugh at the Church's laws, at zeal, at piety.

At first, indeed, this displeaseth their convert: but he is caught: and now he dareth not resist—yea, he feareth even to keep himself from agreeing with them and applauding them.

And presently, that he may please his friends, he detracteth with the detractors, he speaketh evil with the evil speakers, he mocketh with the mockers.

And then he has to celebrate the Holy Eucharist: and he feareth not to open for those most holy mysteries a mouth which is polluted with malignity and foul speaking.

The people are called together to divine service: they have ears to hear: but the pastor hath no voice to speak, for he has spent his time in vanities: he hath not studied, nor prayed, and he is unprepared.

Penitents come to open their grief: and the priest either refuseth it, because he hath promised to go to see his friends, or else he heareth them grudgingly or hurriedly, so that he may go all the sooner to the society of his friends.

One day he is with them, and another day they are with him; and on all hands there is nothing but playing, and feasting, and silly pleasuring.

The substance of My patrimony is squandered away uselessly. In the meantime, the poor groan, the faithful are offended.

Doth any one desire to warn and rebuke this miserable priest? Then he getteth angry, and threateneth.

And even though the bishop himself should rebuke him, he lifteth up himself, he revolteth with angry, or, at least, with contemptuous words.

His friends approve of this, and they excite his anger more and more, and make themselves his encouragers in his rebellion.

And now there is no one that he careth for, or any superior that he hath respect unto: and he abandoneth himself and all that he hath, willingly, unto perversity.

With the worldly he is worldly, with the blasphemers he blasphemeth, with the corrupt he is corrupt, with the drunken he is drunken.

With the sacrilegious he is sacrilegious, with the wicked he is wicked, with the sons of Belial he is a son of Belial—he that was

before a man of God! Behold how the friend of fools is made like unto fools!

5. O, My son! Have charity towards all men; but yet, according to thy strength, be thou careful, lest thou become familiar with such as these: be careful not to enter upon a friendship rashly with anybody—no matter what he may be.

Reveal not to every man thy heart, but only to him whom thou knowest to be wise before Me—one that feareth God; one of good ways; one that is pious, prudent, sober, chaste, studious, merciful, humble, simple, modest, wise.

With such an one be constant: with him preserve the very closest intimacy.

For he, by his example, will urge thee on to perfection: by his gentle admonitions, he will lead thee back, when thou hast gone astray from the right way.

In adversity, he will strengthen and comfort thee: in doubtful things, he will enlighten thee, and will prudently direct thee.

With him, thou shalt rejoice and be glad in that peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Walk on, My son, with such a wise friend, and thou shalt be wise. But with the young, and with strangers, be not frequently conversant: flatter not the rich: in the presence of great men appear not willingly.

For as often as thou shalt be with such, without its being necessary, or without real advantage, thou wilt come away an inferior character.

CHAPTER LXXX.

OF PRESERVING THE BOND OF CHARITY ONE TOWARDS ANOTHER.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. This, My son, is the second commandment, like unto the first and great commandment of the Law.

Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as I have loved thee. This is the new commandment which I have given unto thee.

If thou keep it not, My son, thou shalt abide in death. For how canst thou love thy GOD Whom thou hast not seen, if thou love not thy brother whom thou hast seen?

O My son, this is, above all, My commandment. And if it alone be done, it is enough.

Thou knowest how often I asked My FATHER, that Mine might be one, even as I and the FATHER are One.

Thou knowest how many times, when about to go out of the world, I asked this.

Thou knowest with what commands, again and again repeated, I enjoined them that they should be one.

How am I straitened, My son, until this be perfected.

2. O ye priests: Ye shall be My Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

O ye shepherds of My flock! Love one another, so that My sheep may also love one another, even as I have sanctified Myself, that My sheep might be sanctified.

Ye, being many, are one body—ye, that all partake of one bread. Be ye, also, one heart and one mind.

By this shall men know that ye are My true servants, if ye have this love one towards another.

3. Love ye one another, and I shall be made manifest in you; and the world will believe that the FATHER hath sent Me, and that I have sent you.

Love ye one another; and I will abide with you, and will be always in the midst of you: because, by this love, ye shall always abide assembled and united in My love.

Love ye one another; and the world will admire you, and will hearken unto you, and obey you, and reverence you, and imitate you.

Love ye one another; and the Church shall shine forth in you, and shall be enlarged from one sea unto the other sea, even unto the ends of the earth.

Love ye one another; and at the sight of you even hell itself shall fear, knowing that against My children, joined together in the bond of love, it cannot prevail.

For, by means of this love, they abide safe in My Heart, hidden under My

Wings, living in My Body —safe from the other members, and, as it were, almost as invincible as My own Body.

4. Love ye one another, My little children, even as the members, perfected in one body, love one another.

If any of you suffer, suffer ye together with him. If any be exalted, rejoice with him.

Prefer one another in honour: commanding your inferiors not with arrogance, but as if ye were their fathers: obeying your superiors with humility, and from the heart.

Help one another by your work: aid one another by prayer: stimulate one another by example: direct one another with advice.

Love not in word, nor in tongue; but in deed, and in truth.

Love one another; and hurt not any of your brethren by detraction; and confound not any by contempt; and offend not any by your pride.

Love one another; and not even in the depths of the heart entertain anything against any of your brethren—no envy, nor aversion, nor any suspicion.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O Lord! How good and how pleasant a thing it would be to behold priests thus united in one thorough love!

O wonderful precept of holy love! Oh how well didst Thou sow in Thy field, O Lord, when Thou gavest unto us that commandment.

But, Lord, whence are there the tares in Thy field? Whence are there so many quarrels, so many divisions, so many hatreds, so many enmities between Thy priests, very often, alas! enduring even unto death!

The Voice of the Beloved.

6. Whence, My son, whence? Hence it is, even from their lusts.

Hence: because many love only with a natural and carnal love: few with a holy and spiritual love.

Hence: because that in many there liveth the old man — the man that is proud, covetous, envious, impatient. I will tell thee these secrets, My son, and thou wilt behold.

This man hateth that other because he hath obtained an office or dignity which he himself sought after — because he was

raised to a high estate, whilst he himself was brought down to an obscure and humble condition.

As if all ought to be apostles or prophets—as if I could not make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour.

Again; this one, who hath been set up on high, growing proud, by reason of his pre-eminence, despiseth his inferiors, and, as it were, trampleth them under foot:

As if they were not brothers—as if he were not even as they—dust and ashes—as if it were any disgrace unto him to hold converse with them.

Another taketh a dislike unto him that surpasseth him in the reputation of learning:

As if all ought to be teachers, and it were not allowed Me to bestow the honour and reputation of knowledge on whom I will.

That man, again, envieth his brother, because he worketh more effectually for the conversion of souls:

As if all ought to have the grace of healing souls, and as if I could not give the increase by whom I will.

That priest is envious of another because he is more powerful in eloquence:

As if all ought to speak with tongues, and as if I could not, even as I will, bestow wisdom either on this one or that.

This priest hateth another for that, by reason of his pious life, his own ways, which are more free, are condemned.

That one is proud of his knowledge, or of his piety, and so he holdeth in contempt those whom he believeth to be less pious, or less learned.

That one, being covetous, is a friend of none: he driveth all from him, lest their company should cause him an occasion for expense.

He that is impatient in temper cannot endure those that dislike him, that speak evil of him, that calumniate him, that injure him, that defraud him—nay, even those that jokingly laugh at him—yea, he even detesteth them, he is angry with them, nor will he even grant them pardon when they beg it.

7. Behold, My son, how the worst nature, self-love, turneth away priests themselves from holy charity.

And so will it, also, do with thee, except thou watch.

If thou listen unto it, thou wilt love not others, but thyself only. Thou wouldest wish all others to be under thee, to flatter thee, to serve thee. Thou wouldest not endure one that is holier than thou, more learned, more worthy, more rich.

Yea, verily, that subtle self-love, so that it may draw thee away lawfully, as it were, into a dislike of others, will feign unto thee many defects in others, it will enlarge upon them, it will dilate, lay open, it will prove them.

It will change motes into beams: it will make thee believe many things wrongly of them: or, at least, it will make thee suspect.

And if now it hath drawn thee into a dislike, it will endeavour to turn into hatred: it will move thee to whisperings, to despising, to detractions.

Hence, there arise quarrels, hence contentions, hence enemies, which oftimes go down with the dying priest into the dust of the grave.

Behold, My son, behold how the tares are sowed by the enemy in My field.

Behold how there are no hatreds amongst priests which do not take their rise from some lust or passion.

8. O My son! If thou desirest to preserve a necessary charity with thy brethren, keep all thy passions under discipline: keep thyself from every inordinate desire.

For, as long as thou shalt keep thyself separate, thou canst have no interest in common with thy brethren.

The Voice of the Disciple.

9. O Lord! I will love my brethren: in this I will spend and be spent, knowing this, that if I have not this charity, there is nothing that will profit me—no matter whence I may possess it.

I will love my brethren, and I will be towards all patient and kind: I will not envy; I will not behave myself unseemly; I will not vaunt myself.

I will not be ambitious; I will not seek the things that are my own; I will not be easily provoked; I will think no evil;

I will not rejoice in iniquity: but I will rejoice in the truth; I will bear all things, I will believe all

things, I will endure all things.

I will love, and I will love always: my charity shall never fail.

But the wicked I will hate, for they are hateful unto Thee, O LORD: and yet, even in my hatred, I will have a loving compassion for them, earnestly desiring that they may be turned in their hearts.

LORD, with Thy help, I will seek for those miserable brothers, I will speak unto them, I will persuade them, I will entreat, I will gently rebuke; and then only will I regard them as heathens and publicans, when they will not hear Thy Church.

But of my own self I will not judge, that I be not judged: I will not condemn, that I be not condemned.

Nor is it yet enough, O LORD; for I know that if I only love those that love me, there will be no thanks unto me; for even the sinners love those that love them.

But I will love my very enemies; I will do good unto those that hate me; I will bless them that curse me; I will pray for them that speak evil of me;

I will give my cheek unto him that smiteth; I will yield myself unto him that offereth me violence; I will forgive him that offendeth me: so that I may be merciful, as Thou art merciful, O good LORD—That makest Thy sun to arise on the good and on the evil.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

OF THE OBSERVING OF PRUDENCE AS REGARDS WOMEN.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. I have told thee, My son, and I bid thee never to forget it—many men have perished through the beauty of a woman.

Through Eve, the first man; through Delilah, the strongest man; through the wife of Uriah, the most religious man; by reason of strange women, the wisest man;—all miserably fell.

Who art thou, then, that

thou darest to behave thyself towards them without the most prudent caution?

O My son, O My disciple! Art thou above thy Master? And if I, That am unchangeable holiness, was always most cautious as regards women, can it be right for thee, a reed shaken with the wind, to be incautious?

To Me, indeed, there could be no danger in their conversation; but I wished to give thee an example, that thou shouldest do likewise.

Learn therefore from Me, to have but seldom a short and a severe conversation with them.

Learn not to address foolish women of Samaria, except for their conversion, and to suggest repentance.

Learn not to have words with sinful women, that are ashamed and humbled, except to give them peace, and to teach them a new way.

Learn not to talk with pious Canaanitish women, except it be with a grave and austere goodness.

Learn to repel from thee, even with authority, them that come unto thee by reason of the odour of thy sanctity, if they show too much merely human affection.

Learn not to visit the holy women—the Marys and the Marthas—except for the sake of thy friend Lazarus, their brother, or for the sake of occasion of religion, or of charity.

Learn not to talk unto them of worldly trifles, but of the one thing needful, and of the better part of those things which are above.

Learn not to visit women that are proud, or idle, or busy-bodies, or given to dress, or to the vanities of the world: but to go to and to comfort them that are sick, or that are sad at the death of Lazarus, or that are weeping for the death of an only son.

Learn even to lay aside too great an affection for thy relations; and, by the severity of holiness, temper even thy kindness itself.

If they are too open with thee, and if they bring others freely with them, and thus distract thee from thy prayers or thy study, keep thyself apart, and say, Wherefore is it that ye seek me? Wherefore do ye disturb me? Wist ye not that I must be about my FATHER'S business?

Learn to avoid all suspicions: and whatever may be invented with any appearance of probability, have a care to avoid its being invented.

3. Behold, My son, those priests whose holiness thou usedst formerly to admire, whose example thou wast wont to imitate, in the odour of whose sanctity thou didst follow, and whom thou now beholdest vile, despised, and become abominable.

When, My son, did their gold begin to be tarnished? When was it that their good colour was changed? Was it not when they began to be incautious as regards women?

They did not see the danger of their company: and then they loved; and presently a foul flame burnt up in them; and then I ceased to hold up their right hand; and then they fell, and were dashed to pieces.

Now, the stone hath cried out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber hath answered it.

Now, what they did in secret hath been made manifest in the sight of the sun: now, there is come a scandal unto My whole people.

Woe be unto them! Verily, it had been better for them that a millstone had been hanged about their necks, and they had been drowned in the depths of the sea.

O My son! Let the ruin of these rash ones, that were so foolishly presumptuous as regards themselves, be a caution unto thee.

4. But behold, also, those priests that have not left their first love, but have served Me in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

They, verily, kept themselves clear of evil company, lest wickedness should change their understanding, lest falsehood should deceive their soul.

Those made a covenant with their eyes that they should not even think upon a maid.

Those, indeed, respect aged women, but as mothers: they honour young women, but as sisters, with all purity.

They comfort the widows, but them that are widows indeed: but the widows that live in pleasure they regard as already dead.

Also the younger widows that are idle, that love to go about, that are talkers, busy-bodies, that say things

that are not convenient—them they carefully avoid.

Imitate, My son, those saints; and with them thou wilt preserve thy chastity and thy love.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

THAT THE COMMON WAY OF OTHERS OUGHT TO BE NO RULE FOR A PRIEST.

The Voice of the Beloved.

1. My son, be not conformed unto the world; but prove what is My good Will, and acceptable and perfect; so that, doing it in all things, thou mayest receive the promise.

Powerful as a torrent is the course of men's ways and customs: and except thou diligently attend and stoutly resist, it will drag thee, My son, into the broad way of destruction.

So natural is it for all to follow a multitude—so hard is it to be separate from a multitude—that scarcely could it be done, except by that victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Oh! if the practice of holiness and righteousness were man's way and custom, how many, My son, would be saved! There would be hardly one that would not decline from evil, and who would not do good.

But whereas almost all flesh hath corrupted his way, therefore there followeth a great flood of perverse custom and bad ways, which drowneth almost all.

2. O My son! remember. I have not said unto thee, See what others do, and do thou likewise: but I have commanded thee to keep the Commandments. Follow Me: I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.

Observe, therefore, all the customs and manners of thy country and of thy time: compare them with My Law; and if thou observe them to be contrary, then keep thyself most carefully from them, and lay down for thyself a special rule according to My Commandments.

Know that manners and customs, by whomsoever else they may be observed —yea, even by those set over thee—cannot justify thee in My Judgment.

For I have said unto thee, Do whatsoever they shall bid thee; but do not after their works, if they be evil.

Do not break My Commandments on account of the tradition of their life, if it be wrong.

3. If, therefore, being set up on the high dignity of the priesthood, thou art desirous of walking according to thy vocation, say not: What is done by others? What do others do?

But say: What doth the LORD command me? What doth He require of me? What doth the Church enjoin me to do?

Say not: How do others celebrate the Sacraments? How do they sing? How do they minister?

But say: How doth it become a priest to treat the most sacred mysteries, how to sing the praises of the Almighty, how to fulfil so tremendous an office?

Say not: How are penitents usually treated when they come to the clergy? How is the Word of GOD usually preached?

But say: How ought penitents to be treated, that they may be healed and saved? How must I preach, so that fruit may be brought forth?

Say not: What abuses do others tolerate? But say: What abuses can be tolerated for a time? What abuses ought to be cut off without delay?

Say not: How do others behave themselves? How do they spend their time? How do they employ the revenues of the Church?

How are they clothed? What table have they? What company do they keep? What recreations do they follow?

But say: How ought I to behave myself, that I may be holy myself, and make others holy? How ought I to labour? How is it lawful for me to dress, to eat, to take recreation?

How ought I to spend the goods of the Church, that I may be safe when I come to give my account at the last day?

4. Assuredly, My son, there are many whose examples thou oughtest to observe carefully and attentively, and to follow zealously.

In thine eyes they are

become imitators of Me: so that thou, being allured by their virtues, mightest also become a follower and an imitator of Me.

O My son! Behold them: they will greatly help thy weakness.

But their examples are not the usual way and custom: verily, there are but few chosen compared with the great number of the wicked.

But that way and custom, which thou art bound to beware of, is that which none but an infinite multitude of fools doth practise.

The Voice of the Disciple.

5. O most loving JESU! That hast deigned to call me unto Thy heaven by the narrow way and the strait gate: direct, I pray Thee, my steps in Thy paths.

Grant, O good LORD, that my footsteps slip not, lest at any time, I wander aside unto the broad way, which, Thou hast said, leadeth unto destruction.

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